The Baron Journey

A quarterly newsletter about the BV Journey

JUNE 30, 2026

The Summer Journey: Learning and Leadership at BVLS





Our Journey Continues: A Summer Message

While the traditional school year has come to a close, the energy across Buckeye Valley Local Schools has not slowed down for a single moment. This month, our buildings, grounds, and community spaces have transformed into vibrant hubs of exploration, creativity, and strategic growth. From hands-on student camps to major district milestones, the "Baron Journey" continues straight through the summer months. Summer is often viewed as a time of rest, and while I hope our students and families are enjoying a well-deserved break, it is also a season of intense preparation, building, and renewal for our district. Behind the scenes, our staff is working to lay the groundwork for an incredible 2026-2027 school year.

This month alone, we have seen our hallways filled with the joy of discovery during our 4th annual Summer Enrichment program, watched heavy machinery move into place following our Middle School groundbreaking ceremony, and our athletes have taken to the practice fields in preparation for the fall season.

The progress we make during these summer months is a direct reflection of our community's shared commitment to excellence. Whether we are expanding our facilities to accommodate our growing student body or modernizing our academic offerings, every decision is made with the ultimate goal of supporting and inspiring our young Barons.

Thank you for your continued partnership, your trust, and your unwavering support of Buckeye Valley Local Schools. I invite you to read on to see a glimpse of what's been happening across the district, and I look forward to walking alongside you as we continue this journey together.

Ric Stranges Superintendent
Buckeye Valley Local Schools



Classroom Chronicles: Summer Enrichment in Action

The hallways came alive earlier this month for the 4th annual Buckeye Valley Summer Enrichment (BVSE) program. Running from June 8th through June 11th, the program engaged young Barons in vibrant, nontraditional learning that blended academic curiosity with hands-on fun.
Every single session was proudly designed and taught by our talented BVLS staff, offering students an amazing variety of creative adventures, including:

- **The Creative Arts:** *Animal & Art Adventures, Comic Creations,* and *Nature Crafting.*
- **STEM & Innovation:** *Slime Lab, Space Camp, Hands-on Science,* and *Duct Tape 2.0.*
- **Strategy & Culinary Arts:** *Board Games & Puzzle Masters* and the highly popular *Summer Bake Shop.*
- **Outdoor Exploration:** *Orienteering & Geocaching* alongside *Summer Recess.*

A huge thank you to the educators, staff members, and families who poured their time into making this year's enrichment program such a memorable success. We are already looking forward to year five!

Inside BV: Buckeye Valley Celebrates Its Newest Graduates



Buckeye Valley Local Schools is incredibly proud to celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of the Class of 2026. With 161 extraordinary seniors walking across the stage, this milestone marks both the culmination of years of hard work and the beginning of an exciting new chapter for our graduates. This year's graduating class perfectly embodies the spirit of our community, leaving behind a legacy defined by dedication, character, and exceptional achievement.

The Class of 2026 graduates from a district that continues to reach new heights. This year, Buckeye Valley Local Schools earned a prestigious 5-Star Rating from the State of Ohio, recognizing excellence in growth, achievement, and leadership across the entire district. Our seniors have been vital to that success, serving as role models in academics, the arts, and athletics. Their journey has been supported by our dedicated teachers, a safe and welcoming environment, and the unwavering support of our incredible Baron community.

Whether our graduates are heading to college, entering the workforce, or enlisting in the military, we know they will carry the proud tradition of Baron excellence with them. As these seniors transition into the next chapter of their journeys, the entire district extends its warmest congratulations.

Thank you, Class of 2026, for making us proud every step of the way. We cannot wait to see how you change the world!



Building for the Future: Facilities Feature

Summer is peak construction season, and work is officially and actively underway following our Buckeye Valley Middle School Groundbreaking Ceremony! Our construction team has been hard at work, and the project is already building major momentum.

In just one month since we officially broke ground, the site is already transforming daily:

- **Clearing & Demolition:** Playground equipment, concrete, and asphalt have been removed from the future footprint of the addition.
- **Site Setup:** Trees cleared earlier this spring have been hauled away, and remaining stumps have been ground down.
- **Command Center:** The construction manager's office trailer is set up to ensure daily operations move smoothly.

Keep an eye out for an increase in heavy equipment and haul trucks as we hit these next major milestones:

1. Crews will begin stripping the topsoil in the building area to prep the foundation.
2. Excavation will start on the new retention pond, designed to safely capture and manage stormwater runoff.

We are incredibly excited about this addition and look forward to sharing more milestones as we build a brighter future for our Barons. Stay tuned to the Baron Buzz for updates all summer long!



The Heart of BV: Celebrating the 2026 Baron Award of Excellence

In May, the Buckeye Valley community came together for a truly special evening to celebrate and honor our outstanding students, staff, volunteers, and community members at the annual Baron Award of Excellence ceremony.

This prestigious district honor recognizes individuals who go above and beyond, demonstrating exceptional leadership, character, and dedication while making a profound and lasting impact across our entire district. Out of the many thoughtful nominations submitted by peers, families, and community members, a total of 10 exceptional individuals received the award this year. Our Superintendent, Ric Stranges, and Assistant Superintendent, Rex Reeder, served as the Masters of Ceremonies for the evening, guiding families through a night filled with inspiring stories, laughter, and immense school pride.

While this award celebrates various pillars of our school community, we are especially proud of our student leaders who model what it truly means to walk the "Baron Journey." Whether they are lifting up their peers in the classroom, leading on the athletic fields, or contributing their talents to our vibrant arts programs, these young leaders serve as the ultimate role models for our district.

The dedication, kindness, and hard work displayed by this year's Baron Award of Excellence recipients remind us that true excellence isn't just about personal achievements; it is about lifting up those around you and making Buckeye Valley a better place for everyone.

Please join us in congratulating all of our incredible winners on this well-deserved honor! You make our entire community incredibly proud.

Pictured Above: Front Row (L to R): Marie DeJaynes, Evelyn Frost-Schiller, Dawson Ray, Abigail Bales, Olivia Penkal, Tara Jenkins
Back Row (L to R): Tina Darst, Ayden Brown, Andrea Craig, Kathy Winbourne, Chris Jenkins

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The Faces of BV: Cultivating Curiosity with Our Gifted Education Team

While the "Baron Journey" looks unique for every student, Buckeye Valley Local Schools is deeply committed to ensuring our advanced learners are continually challenged, inspired, and supported. Leading this vital mission across our district are Mrs. Jennifer McCreary and Mrs. Laura Pappa, who spearhead our Gifted Education programming with passion, innovation, and a deep understanding of advanced learning needs.

Our gifted team works behind the scenes and inside the classrooms to design enriched curricula, facilitate higher-order thinking, and provide the specialized resources our students need to thrive. Below is a Leader Snapshot featuring some of the insights, strategies, and philosophies our team brings to our schools every day:

Leader Snapshot: Jennifer McCreary & Laura Pappa

- **Their Role in the District:** Gifted Education Coordinators (The "Curiosity Champions" for our advanced learners!)
- **The Daily Mission:** Jennifer and Laura manage a comprehensive, tiered enrichment system. They collaborate directly with classroom teachers to differentiate instruction, design cluster-grouping strategies, and implement rigorous, creative extensions for students.
- **What They Love About BV:** The personalized, community-first approach. They appreciate that every student's journey looks different and take pride in recognizing that giftedness is not simply about high test scores; it is about curiosity, creativity, passions, and the unique ways students think and solve problems. They love helping students discover their strengths, connect learning to their interests, and recognize their own potential as learners and future problem solvers.
- **Innovation First:** Under their leadership, the department emphasizes that gifted services are not simply "more work," but rather different and meaningful work. Jennifer and Laura focus on creating opportunities for students to explore, question, collaborate, and think deeply through inquiry-based learning, critical thinking experiences, and real-world problem solving. Their goal is to provide students with challenges that help them grow while encouraging them to see learning as a process of discovery.
- **Beyond the Classroom:** When they aren't mapping out advanced learning pathways or designing lessons, both Jennifer and Laura are passionate educators who continue to expand their own learning. They collaborate with colleagues, connect with other gifted education professionals, and seek out new ideas and strategies to better support students and teachers. Their commitment to growth extends beyond their students.

The next time you see our students diving deep into an independent research project, engaging in a meaningful enrichment experience, or exploring new ways to think and learn, know that the dedicated gifted education team is working behind the scenes to nurture curiosity, celebrate unique perspectives, and create opportunities for students to discover just how much they are capable of achieving.

The Baron Activity Beat: Student Life Beyond the Bell



State Champion! Browning Takes the Gold!
Talk about a finish for the history books! Buckeye Valley senior Austin Browning closed out his high school running career in the most thrilling way possible to capture the Division III state title in the 110m hurdles!
The Details:

- The Winning Time: A personal-best 13.98 seconds.
- The Margin: He narrowly edged out Field High School's Logan Border by a mere 0.01 seconds (13.99) in a true photo finish.
- A Dominant Season: This championship caps off an incredible year where Browning took 1st place in 10 out of the 13 hurdle races he ran this season.

A huge congratulations to Austin! The entire Baron community is incredibly proud of you!



Barons By the Numbers: BV Summer Enrichment

While much of the Baron Journey happens during the traditional school year, learning and discovery don't stop when summer arrives! Here is a look at the massive success of our 4th Annual Buckeye Valley Summer Enrichment (BVSE) program:

- **4 Years Strong:** The number of years this vital program has been providing vibrant, nontraditional summer learning for our young Barons.
- **16 Unique Courses:** From creative fields like *Animal & Art Adventures* and *Comic Creations* to STEM-based favorites like *Slime Lab* and *Space Camp*, our students explored a wide array of hands-on topics.
- **100% BVLS Staffed:** Every single course was proudly designed, coordinated, and taught by our own dedicated Buckeye Valley teachers and staff members.
- **120+ Students Engaged:** The incredible group of eager elementary and middle school learners who filled our classrooms with energy, creativity, and curiosity from June 8th through June 11th.

Did You Know? Buckeye Valley students mixed, stretched, and created more than 35 gallons of custom slime in our Slime Lab. That's enough to fill a standard backyard kiddie pool! Our young scientists learned first-hand about polymers, chemical bonds, and non-Newtonian fluids, proving that at Buckeye Valley, getting your hands a little messy is all part of the ultimate learning journey.

Our Community: Bridging the Summer Gap



Strong schools are supported by strong communities. This summer, we are proud to highlight an incredible partnership that ensures our students stay nourished, supported, and connected even while school is out of session.

We are thrilled to share that a **FREE**, district-wide Summer Lunch Program is available to local families! Now through August 6th, all students and families in the Buckeye Valley Local School District are invited to join us for a free lunch, friendly faces, and community connection.

- **Where:** Harrison Place, Ashley, Ohio
- **When:** Every Thursday from **Noon – 2:00 PM** (through August 6th)
- **Who:** All Buckeye Valley students and families are welcome!

This program is proudly sponsored by Harrison Place, Gibby's Pizza, and Neighborhood Bridges Buckeye Valley. We are incredibly grateful for these generous community partners.

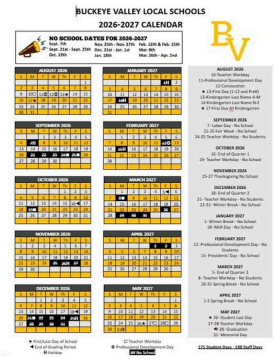
How Neighborhood Bridges Works
When a need arises in our district, whether it's supporting a summer lunch initiative, helping a student in need of a winter coat, or providing school supplies, our school advocates (including counselors, teachers, and principals) step in. They share the need with our volunteer area directors, who post it anonymously to our website and social media. From there, the Buckeye Valley community responds with generosity, purchasing items directly or contributing financially to fill the gap.

Want to get involved?
Subscribe to our emails here to stay informed about current needs in our district and learn how you can help. You can also follow us on social media, Facebook and Instagram, to see real-time updates and opportunities to make a difference.

Questions? Email the team at buckeyevalley@neighborhoodbridges.org

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Join the Journey: Important Dates & Stay Connected



The Baron Journey is a path we walk together. Whether you are cheering from the sidelines, applauding a performance, or volunteering, your presence is the heartbeat of our community partnership. We invite you to join the journey.

Upcoming Dates

- **July 21: Supplies for Scholars** event at BV East, 11 am-1 pm
- **July 21:** Join us for the July Board of Education Meeting at 6:30 pm in Baron Hall.
- **August 3:** Final Schedule Release/Homeroom Teacher Assignments grades 1-12
- **August 13:** First Day of School PreK and Grades 1-12
- **August 13 & 14:** Kindergarten Staggered Start Last name A-M attend Aug. 13th Last name N-Z attend August 14th

Stay Informed: Keep an eye on our District Calendar for more community events and school activities.

Get Involved: Our story is best told when we are all connected. Here is how you can stay in the loop and help shape the future of Buckeye Valley:

- **Visit Our Digital Hub:** For the latest news and detailed facilities updates, visit www.mybvls.org.
- **Follow the Story:** Catch highlights and student success stories by following our official social media handles.
- **Your Direct Link:** Ensure you never miss an update by creating your ParentSquare account. Register HERE to stay connected to district events and happenings.