

JULY 2026

A photograph of a baseball player in a dark uniform sliding into a base on a dirt field. In the background, another player in a yellow shirt stands on the field. The sky is overcast. The text "BLAIR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS" is overlaid in large white letters.

BLAIR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

BOE Approves First Round of New Policies

The Blair Community Schools Board of Education met on July 13 and continued its work to prepare for a strong start to the 2026–2027 school year.

Following a public hearing, the Board approved the 2026–2027 student fee schedule with only minimal changes from the previous year, helping maintain consistency for families.

The Board was also grateful to accept two generous donations. The Blair Rotary Club contributed \$2,000 to support the purchase of outdoor tables for the high school seating area outside the lunchroom windows, creating an inviting space for students. In addition, Good News Garage donated \$1,100 to the high school dance team, continuing their support of student activities.

Work is ongoing with KSB Law to review and update district policies. The first group of revised policies was approved on first reading, with one additional reading needed before final approval. The Board also approved a new wireless microphone system for Krantz Field. This upgrade will enhance sound quality for school events, allow for multiple microphones to be used at once, and improve coverage across the field, benefiting activities such as homecoming pep rallies.

In addition, the final reading of the PK–12 student handbooks was approved, ensuring everything is in place for the upcoming school year.

Finally, the Board approved a new vendor contract with Coke that will begin this school year. Coke products will be available across the district, including in vending machines and at concession stands.

The Board of Education remains committed to supporting students, staff, and families and looks forward to an exciting year ahead.

Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Don Johnson



Dear Blair Community,

We're back! The start of the 2026–27 school year is just around the corner, and it's exciting to see students and families returning to our buildings. The familiar energy that comes with the beginning of a new school year is one of the best parts of serving in education.

This summer has been a productive one across the district. From construction projects and facility improvements to curriculum planning, budget development, board and administrative retreats, deep cleaning, and the hiring of outstanding new staff members, countless hours have been dedicated to preparing for a successful school year. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to our Board of Education, district leadership, administrators, teachers, support staff, custodians, maintenance crews, and everyone whose hard work makes the opening of school possible.

One of the Board of Education's top priorities has been enhancing safety throughout Blair Community Schools. As part of that commitment, secure entrances have been added at both Otte Middle School and Arbor Park Elementary.

At Otte Middle School, a classroom adjacent to the main entrance has been transformed into a secure vestibule that allows staff to identify visitors and control building access through a secure buzz-in system. The renovated space also includes a welcoming reception area, an office for the assistant principal, and a new conference room.

The project at Arbor Park Elementary is more extensive. It includes expanding the cafeteria, relocating the administrative offices, and constructing a new secure entrance. Because of the scope of this work, construction will continue throughout the school year. We appreciate everyone's patience and flexibility during this process and encourage families to watch for updates and guidance from Principal Kyle Johnson regarding any adjustments to daily operations.

Prior to the July Board of Education meeting, the board held its annual retreat at the North School Administrative Offices. The day began with a review of my interim superintendent progress report, focusing on the culture of our district and the positive changes made to address areas identified by both the Board of Education and our staff. I am incredibly proud of the collective efforts of our board members, administrators, teachers, and staff as we continue working together to strengthen our district and move Blair Community Schools forward.

The board also received presentations from several district leaders, including Leon Haith, Director of Student Services; Tom Shearer, Business Manager; Erin Fields, Director of Curriculum and Assessment; Scott Macholan, Director of Technology; and Jeff Steinbeck, Director of Buildings and Grounds. These presentations provided valuable insight into each department's work, current initiatives, and future priorities. Using this information, the Board developed its goals for the 2026–27 school year, which will be presented for approval at the August board meeting.

I also want to share that Blair Community Schools will be conducting a comprehensive Communication Audit during the upcoming school year. The purpose of this process is to gather feedback from our many stakeholders—including families, students, staff, and community members—to help us better understand how we communicate and where we can improve. Our goal is to ensure that information about our schools, programs, and opportunities is shared in ways that are timely, clear, and meaningful. I am excited about what we will learn through this process and how it will strengthen our connection with the community.

As we prepare to welcome students back, I want to thank everyone who has contributed to getting our schools ready for another outstanding year. The dedication and teamwork demonstrated throughout the summer have been remarkable, and I couldn't be more excited about the year ahead.

It is truly an honor to serve the Blair Community Schools. My door is always open, and I welcome the opportunity to visit with you, hear your thoughts, and answer your questions. Even more importantly, I invite you to visit our schools and see firsthand the incredible learning, growth, and opportunities taking place every day. Together, we will continue making Blair Community Schools a place where every student can thrive.

Here's to a wonderful 2026–27 school year! Good luck, and God bless!

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dr. Don Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Don Johnson, Ed. D.
Superintendent
Blair Community Schools

Back to School - Student Supply Lists

Ready to start the school year strong? We are excited to share the 2026–2027 school supply lists to help students and families prepare for a successful year ahead.

Student supply lists are now available for all grade levels. You can find them linked directly in this newsletter and on the Blair Community Schools website under Announcements & Information.

These lists include the essential supplies students will need to begin the year prepared and ready to learn. Teachers and staff have carefully created these lists to provide families with clear guidance on preferred and acceptable supplies while keeping the items manageable.

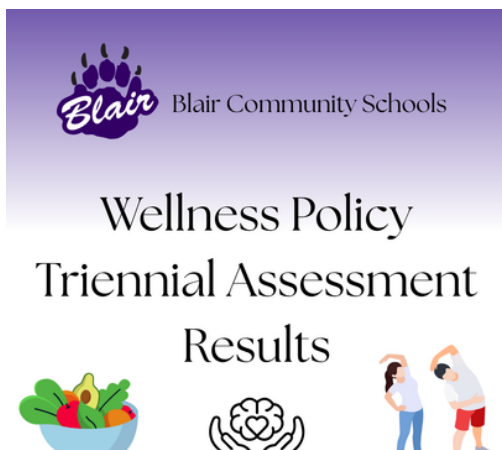
We understand that gathering school supplies can be a challenge for some families. If you need assistance, please reach out to your child's school office. We are grateful for the support of our community partners and local organizations who help ensure all students have the resources they need to have a great start to the school year.

[!\[\]\(d66ff64371a51729ac8c1cdaa685ba6f_img.jpg\) Click here to view the 2026–2027 Supply Lists](#)

We can't wait to welcome students back to school!



Wellness Policy Assessment Results



The results from the Blair Community Schools Wellness Policy Triennial Assessment are now available for review.

This assessment is completed every three years to evaluate our district's wellness policies and practices related to student health, nutrition, physical activity, and overall well-being. The results help us reflect on our current efforts, celebrate areas of success, and identify opportunities to continue strengthening wellness initiatives throughout our schools.

You can access the assessment results by [clicking here](#) or by visiting the Blair Community Schools website under Announcements & Information.

We appreciate the continued support and partnership of our students, families, staff, and community as we work together to promote a healthy, safe, and supportive learning environment for all students.

Construction Updates: Secure Entrances Coming to Otte Middle School and Arbor Park Elementary



Construction on the new secure entrances at Otte Middle School and Arbor Park Elementary School has continued throughout the summer as Blair Community Schools works to improve safety, security, and functionality across our facilities. The Otte Middle School project is expected to be completed by mid-August, while the Arbor Park Elementary project is scheduled for completion in Spring 2027.

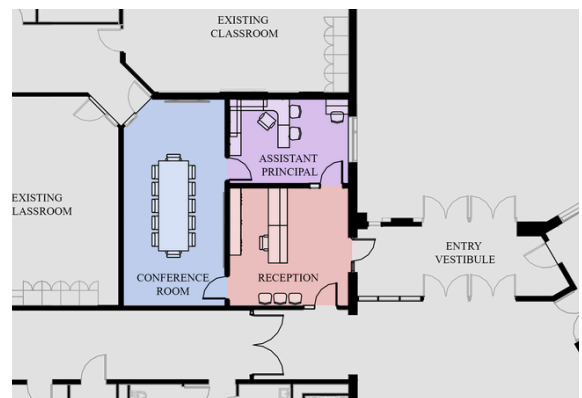
Construction crews have worked closely with the district to minimize noise and disruptions during the school day so students and staff can remain focused on learning.

“We just have to get our buildings in a better place so that we can prepare our district for the possible growth coming and, honestly, just get caught up on a lot of maintenance that wasn’t done in the last few years,” said Interim Superintendent Dr. Don Johnson during a June interview with Blair Radio.

At Otte Middle School, the DR Anderson team is nearing completion of the secure entrance project, which will provide a safer and more welcoming entry point for students, staff, and visitors. At Arbor Park Elementary, Prairie Construction is continuing work on the secure entrance while also expanding the cafeteria to better accommodate the growing number of students.

The photos included with this article are renderings of the proposed finished front entrance design for Arbor Park Elementary School and the planned layout of the updated office areas at Otte Middle School. These images provide a look ahead at the improvements coming to both buildings.

During construction at Arbor Park, the main entrances will be unavailable. Students in grades 3–5 and all visitors will enter through the gym doors, with a temporary hallway providing access to the rest of the building. Students in grades K–2 will use the recess doors as their temporary entrance. The main office will operate from a temporary location just off the gym for most of the school year.



Parents and guardians picking up students during the school day will continue to check in through the Main Office. Lunch will remain in the cafeteria, although seating will be more limited during construction.

Safety remains the district’s top priority throughout this process. Doors will continue to remain locked, staff will be present during drop-off and pick-up, and students will be reminded of safety expectations.

Blair Community Schools appreciates the patience and partnership of our families, staff, and community as we continue investing in safe, welcoming spaces that support our students today and for years to come.

The Work Behind the Welcome Back

When students return to Blair schools in August, they will walk into clean, welcoming spaces ready for another year of learning. Fresh floors, organized classrooms, and prepared buildings are the result of countless hours of work from our dedicated maintenance and facilities team.

Throughout the summer, our custodians work hard to ensure every corner of our schools is safe and ready for students and staff. At Deerfield, custodian Ms. Rhonda and her team begin their days as early as 5:30 a.m., cleaning, disinfecting, scrubbing floors, and completing deep-cleaning tasks throughout the building.



“Custodians, all custodians, are trying their best to make sure things are up to par for the kids,” said Ms. Rhonda.

While much of their work happens behind the scenes, their impact is felt every day. Our facilities team helps create spaces where students and staff feel safe, comfortable, and proud to be part of Blair Community Schools.

“It’s a very supportive environment,” said Ms. Rhonda. “There’s a lot of camaraderie between custodians and teachers. It’s just a lot of positive.”

As students return this fall, we hope they feel the care and dedication that goes into preparing our schools. Our maintenance and facilities team, along with the entire Blair Community Schools family, is committed to providing the best environment for students to learn and succeed.

Save the Dates: A Great Year Starts Here

The 2026–2027 school year is just around the corner! We are excited to welcome students and families back and have included a few important dates to help everyone prepare for a great start.

- Aug 7 | Kindergarten Roundup
- Last Names A–K: 8:30–10:00 a.m.
- Last Names L–Z: 10:30 a.m.–12:00 p.m.
- Aug 10 | 9th Grade Open House - 6:00–7:30 p.m.
- Aug 12 | First Day of School (Freshman Only Day)
- Aug 13 | First Day of School (Grades 10–12)
- Aug 13 | Elementary Open House
- Last Names A–K: 5:00–6:00 p.m.
 - Last Names L–Z: 6:00–7:00 p.m.
- Aug 13 | 7th & 8th Open House - 6:00–8:00 p.m.
- Aug 19 | 6th Grade Open House - 6:00–7:00 p.m.
- Aug 19 | First Day of School (Grades Pre–K–8)

Back-to-school paperwork is completed online through the Family Information Portal, available under the “Parent/Student” tab on the district website. Beginning August 11, parents can view teacher assignments once online verification has been completed.

Be sure to follow your school’s social media accounts and visit the district website for the latest updates and reminders as we prepare for another great year.

We can’t wait to welcome our students back!

Bear Backers 11th Annual Golf Tournament



Blair Bear Backers is excited to host the 11th Annual Golf Tournament on Saturday, August 15. Whether you are looking to enjoy a round of golf with friends, support Blair Community Schools, or promote your business through one of our sponsorship opportunities, there are plenty of ways to get involved.

A variety of sponsorship packages are available and are detailed in the event flyer.

The tournament will be held at River Wilds Golf Club, with check-in beginning at 8:00 a.m. Participants can look forward to:

- 18 holes of golf
- Lunch included
- Raffles and great prizes

There are still spots available, and registration will remain open until the day of the event. Proceeds from this year's tournament will support upgrades to the sound system at

Krantz Field, helping enhance the experience for students, families, and fans attending events throughout the year.

Come support Blair Community Schools, enjoy a great day on the course, and show off your golf skills (or lack thereof, we don't judge)!

Join Us for Blair Schools Foundation Family Fun Night!

Don't miss the Blair Schools Foundation Family Fun Night on Friday, August 21, at Krantz Field! This is a great opportunity to kick off the school year, connect with our community, and show your Blair Bear pride.

The evening begins with doors opening at 5:00 p.m., followed by volleyball at 5:30 p.m. and football at 7:00 p.m. Families can enjoy a variety of activities, including bounce houses, face painting, airbrush tattoos, balloon twisting, a strolling magician, community partners, and much more!

Plus, enjoy free hot dog meals from WCB, popcorn from RVR Bank-Washington County, and water from Taylor's. Local favorites including The Cheese Life, Bowman Funnel Cakes, and Lou & Co Shave Ice will also be available.

The best part? 100% of the proceeds go back to Blair Community Schools and our students.

Join us as we celebrate the start of a new school year and another year of Blair Bear pride! For more details, visit the [Blair Schools Foundation Facebook page](#).





Sports & Activities

Our Blair Bears have been putting in the work all summer long. From strength training and conditioning to wrestling, football, softball, and more, students have been preparing to return stronger, more confident, and ready for the 2026–2027 activities season.

Being involved in school activities is a great way for students to connect with their school and community, stay active, build relationships, and create memories that last a lifetime. The success we see during the season begins well before the first competition, with countless hours of preparation, dedication, and teamwork from our students and coaches.

Last year, our community stepped up in an incredible way to support the Bears, and the response was overwhelming. We are excited to continue building that energy and enthusiasm throughout the 2026–2027 season. Your support makes a difference for our students and helps create an amazing atmosphere for all of our activities.

Fall activities officially begin on August 10 for Blair High School and August 17 for Otte Middle School. Be sure to check the online activities calendar for schedules, game days, competitions, performances, and other important updates.

Parents of students in grades 7–12 are also invited to attend the Sports and Activities Parent Meeting on August 11 from 6:30–8:00 p.m. in the Blair High School Auditorium. The meeting will cover important topics to help student-athletes be successful, including mental wellness, strength training, and nutrition. We encourage families to attend and learn more about how they can support their students throughout the season.

As a reminder, all student-athletes must have an updated physical on file before participating. Please contact the Activities Office if you are unsure whether your student's paperwork is current.

We are excited for another great year of Blair Bear pride and look forward to cheering on our students throughout the season!

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
 YOU TUBE	 X (FORMERLY TWITTER)