



SEPTEMBER 2026 NEWSLETTER BLAIR COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

WHERE ALL STUDENTS LEARN

Board of Education News

The September Board of Education meeting was held on Monday, September 14. The evening began with a public hearing on the proposed 2026–27 budget and tax levy. There were no public comments shared during the hearing.

The Board approved and gratefully accepted several generous donations that support student opportunities across the district, including \$2,040 from the Blair Wrestling Club to assist with hotel expenses for the CB Classic in December, \$2,000 from Pheasant Bonanza to the football program in appreciation of the team's service and support, \$1,000 from Novonesis to the Blair High Robotics Club to support STEM learning and student development, and \$1,000 from Chevy Youth Sports in partnership with Sid Dillon Chevrolet to the High School Cross Country team. We are thankful for the continued support from our community and the positive impact these contributions have on our students and programs.

The Board also approved two bids related to the high school auditorium rigging system. The first, approximately \$101,000, will ensure the current system is safe and usable for this school year. The second, \$43,100, will fund the development of plans and specifications for a full system replacement, with completion targeted for August 2027.

In addition, the Board approved the 2026–27 school budget and tax levy. This marks the fifth consecutive year of a reduced general fund levy, with this year's decrease at approximately 1.5 cents. The approved budget also includes increased funding for curriculum to support upcoming adoption cycles and continued instructional improvement.

Message from Blair Community Schools Superintendent, Dr. Don Johnson



It seems like just yesterday that we were opening our buildings for the start of another school year. Now, we are fully engaged in the rhythm of fall, and the cooler temperatures have brought with them a whirlwind of activities, events, and opportunities for our students.

Our fall sports are off to a great start! Our students are working hard to represent Blair Community Schools with pride and excellence. It has been exciting to watch our student-athletes give their best on the fields, in the gym, and on the courses. Their commitment, teamwork, and school spirit are something we can all be proud of.

Our marching band begins its competition season this weekend, and our FFA students are also busy competing in a variety of judging events. I have also enjoyed attending our elementary Fun Run events. These events are a great way to bring our students, families, staff, and community together while raising additional funds to support our elementary schools. Thank you to everyone who helped make these events successful and to those who continue to support our students and schools.

Communication Audit

The Board of Education and district administration are committed to strengthening communication with our parents, families, staff, students, and community. During the month of October, we will be sending surveys to our parents and community members to gather feedback about how we can improve the way we communicate district information, events, and important decisions. Your input will help us better understand what is working, where we have opportunities to improve, and how we can keep our community better informed. This is an important initiative for the Board of Education, and I encourage everyone to take a few minutes to complete the survey when it becomes available. Your feedback will help shape our communication efforts for years to come.

Facility Study

We continue to take a comprehensive look at all of our district facilities, evaluating both their condition and their functionality and considering how well they meet the needs of our students, staff, and community.

The Board of Education has made significant investments in our facilities, and several important projects are currently underway. The renovation at Otte Middle School is nearing completion. We are currently waiting for the new furniture to arrive and be installed so that we can fully utilize the renovated spaces. We are excited about the improvements and the opportunities they will provide for our students and staff. Work at Arbor Park Elementary is also progressing. The cafeteria renovation is moving along well, and we anticipate being able to utilize the additional cafeteria space later this semester. The exterior addition has progressed more slowly due to the significant rainfall we have experienced as well as delays in obtaining the necessary steel. We appreciate everyone's patience as we work through these challenges.

We are also exploring improvements at the South Early Childhood Center, including the possibility of creating a more secure entrance. In addition, we have begun the process of taking a closer look at our High School facility and considering what it will need to serve our students and community in the future. Our first Ad Hoc Facilities Committee meeting was held this past week. The committee includes Board members, students, administrators, district directors, and community members. This group will help us begin a thoughtful and comprehensive evaluation of our current high school facility and explore the possibilities for the future. There is much more work to be done, and I look forward to keeping our community informed as this process develops. These are important conversations, and we want to make sure we are thoughtful and intentional about the decisions we make regarding our facilities.

Superintendent Search

If I were a younger man, this probably wouldn't be an issue! But in all seriousness, I have thoroughly enjoyed my time serving as your Superintendent. Blair Community Schools is a great district, and I feel very fortunate to have had the opportunity to work alongside such a dedicated group of administrators, teachers, support staff, students, families, and community members. The Board of Education is being very intentional about the process of selecting the next Superintendent of Schools. I encourage our community to stay engaged in the process and to reach out to your Board members with your thoughts and input. The interview process is expected to take place in November, and there will be opportunities for members of the community to meet the candidates as they come to Blair for interviews. Additional information about those opportunities will be shared as the process moves forward.

I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Blair Community Schools and to be part of the exciting work happening across our district. There are great things happening in our schools, and I am proud of the students and staff who make Blair Community Schools such a special place. Thank you again for the opportunity to serve this district. I am grateful for your support, your partnership, and the trust you have placed in me.

Dr. J

Mock Interviews Give Students Real Life Experience



On Sept. 17th, Mrs. Saville's senior Business Composition class traded their casual school day for a real taste of the professional world during mock interviews. The energy in the room was a mix of nerves and excitement as 16 local businesses set up shop. What made the event truly special was that every single company represented a career field the students actually want to pursue after graduation.



The seniors absolutely knocked it out of the park, showing up dressed to impress and ready to talk about their goals. The business owners and professionals didn't hold back either, asking real, challenging questions, looked over student resumes, and gave honest feedback. It was a massive confidence booster for the class, giving them a head start on real-world communication skills before they even throw their graduation caps.

Rooftop Camp Outs

The Blair Community Schools biennial K-5 Fun Run fundraiser took place on Friday, September 18 at Krantz Field, where students spent the day celebrating with fellow classmates, family, friends and teachers. During their time there, the students did laps around the track in any way they chose, whether it was running, skipping, or even dancing. As a promise to students for meeting their fundraising goals, the principals of BCS elementary schools, Mr. Kyle Johnson and Dr. Dania Freudenburg, camped overnight on the roof of their respective schools on Tuesday night.

"Our staff, all of us, would do anything for our students," said Dr. Freudenburg. "I love how supportive our community is of events like this and our schools in general."

On Tuesday, students and parents could see their school principals waving from the roof for dismissal with their tents set up and books in hand. Many families and staff members came to visit throughout the evening to deliver snacks, encouraging words, or just to make sure they were still there!

"There must have been like 40 or 50 students that came by. That was my favorite part of it," said Mr. Johnson. So how do you survive a night on the roof of your local elementary school? Mr. Johnson recommends checking your inflatable mattress for holes ahead of time and bringing a backup sleeping bag just in case. Dr. Freudenburg added one more important tip: "Don't drink a lot of water before bed. Using the restroom was an ordeal to get back down."

To curb any doubt they stayed there all night, Dr. Freudenburg live-posted her evening to Deerfield's social media, pranks and all. One Deerfield staff member put a motion sensor Halloween decoration at the bottom of Dr. Freudenburg's access ladder, which went off at night when she went for a restroom break. The principals were on the rooftop when student arrived Wednesday morning, and finally came down once the school day began, with students and staff joining them for a school-wide pajama day.

Overall, they were thankful for everyone that made the Fun Run and their overnight camping successful. The funds raised will be used to add to outdoor student spaces, fund field trips, teacher appreciations, and all kinds of exciting learning experiences for students.

"I would do it again," said Johnson. "I want to make school fun and make students feel connected."



BHS Homecoming 2026

The community came together for a full weekend of school spirit as Blair High School celebrated its annual Homecoming game on September 18 and dance on September 19.

The festivities kicked off with the annual Homecoming parade through town, featuring purple and various BHS athletic and activity organizations showcasing the amazing opportunities and student participation at Blair Community Schools. Families, alumni, and community members lined the streets to cheer on the parade participants and show their support for the school.

On Friday night, September 11, the action moved to Krantz Field for the Homecoming football game. Building on the momentum of their thrilling victory the week before, the Blair Bears delivered a dominant performance on both sides of the ball, securing a decisive win in front of a packed home crowd. Friday night also featured the coronation ceremony, where Jake Baker and Josie Kros were named Homecoming King and Queen, recognized by their peers for their leadership, character, and school pride.

The celebration concluded on Saturday, September 12, as students gathered at the high school gym for the Homecoming dance. Dressed in formal wear, students enjoyed an evening of music, photos, and dancing, wrapping up a memorable week of traditions for the entire BHS community.



Happening In Our Schools



Blair High School

The start of the school year has been strong at Blair High School, with students and staff quickly building momentum across academics, activities, and school spirit. Junior Bear Cheer kicked off at the first home football game on September 4, with approximately 165 K-5 students participating in a fun and energetic evening that included cheers, stunts, and plenty of Bear pride.

Homecoming week, September 7-11, was another highlight, featuring themed dress-up days, a spirited parade, pep rally, coronation of Queen Josie Kros and King Jake Baker, and a meaningful 9/11 tribute at the football game with local first responders and student performances. Students are also staying active in the classroom and beyond, with groups such as choir, FFA, FBLA, and our fall musical cast continuing to represent BHS with pride.



Otte Blair Middle School

As we move into the month ahead, we are continuing to build strong routines and a steady sense of momentum across our building. This time of year is all about consistency. The daily habits students are developing now truly set the tone for learning, growth, and confidence in the weeks to come.

Throughout the month, our focus remains on the simple but important things that make a big difference: showing up ready to learn, staying engaged, and putting forth consistent effort each day. These "keep going" moments may feel routine, but they are where real progress happens in the classroom. We will also continue to reinforce our core values of being safe, respectful, and responsible.

As always, we appreciate your continued support at home. Your partnership helps reinforce these expectations and keeps our students moving forward with confidence. We are excited to see the growth this month will bring!

Happening In Our Schools



Arbor Park Elementary School

It has been a busy and exciting stretch at Arbor Park! Our Fun Run Fundraiser was a huge success, and we are so grateful for the incredible support from our students, families, and community. Our students also had a great time celebrating Homecoming with fun activities and the Homecoming Parade. It was fun to see our Bears showing their school spirit and cheering on the Blair Bears!

Amid all of the fun, our students have also been doing what they do best—learning! Classrooms have been full of great instruction, collaboration, reading, writing, problem-solving, and plenty of hands-on learning. We also enjoyed welcoming families for our EL Family Night, which was a wonderful opportunity to connect with families and celebrate our students. We are thankful for all of the ways our Arbor Park families continue to partner with us and make our school such a special place to learn and grow.



Deerfield Elementary School

As September comes to a close, we want to extend a heartfelt thank you for the incredible support shown across Deerfield Elementary this month. A special thank you to everyone who supported the Rooftop Campout event. I appreciated the visits, waves, and encouragement throughout the evening. It was a memorable night for our students and a fun way to build school spirit. We also want to celebrate the success of our Fun Run Fundraiser. With a goal of \$20,000, our school community came together in an amazing way and raised over \$25,000! Staff have already begun brainstorming ideas for how to use these funds, and we will also gather student input so they have a voice in the process.

Looking ahead, Parent Teacher Conferences are right around the corner. Please see the schedule for details on sign ups and times. During conference week, school will dismiss early on October 14 and 15, and there will be no school on October 16 or October 19. Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting our students and for helping make Deerfield a strong and connected school community.

Happening In Our Schools



South Early Childhood Center

As September comes to a close, the energy, joy, and growth in our preschool classrooms at South Early Childhood Center continue at full speed. This past month focused on building foundational skills like listening, following routines, and practicing social skills, with staff creating a warm and supportive environment for every child.

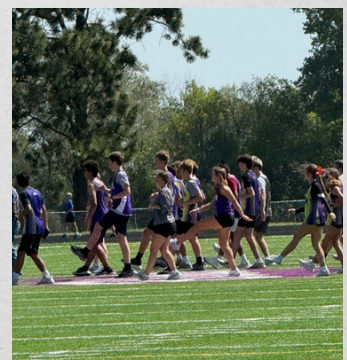
Our young learners have already experienced so much, from caring for and releasing butterflies to exploring new playground equipment, while also beginning a curriculum that supports early literacy, pre-writing, and social-emotional growth. Through purposeful, play-based learning, students will continue building both confidence and skills throughout the year.

Thank you to our incredible staff for the care, patience, and dedication you bring each day. Your work is setting our youngest learners up for long-term success.

Fun Run Fundraiser

The morning of September 11 brought incredible energy to the Blair High School track at Kranz Field for our biennial BCS Elementary Fun Run Fundraiser! Students from both Arbor Park and Deerfield Elementary filled the track for a full, hot, but fun-filled day of running, laughing, and coming together as a community to celebrate our kids and raise money for our schools.

A huge highlight of the day was having the Blair High School Cross Country team out on the field with us. They brought incredible hype to every corner of the track—passing out water, handing out high-fives, and even jogging alongside our younger students who needed a little extra push. A massive thank you to our high school volunteers and supportive families for helping make this event a fantastic success and creating wonderful memories for our students!





Activities & Events

The month of September at Blair High School has been a moody mix of heavy rain, overcast skies, and soaked fields. The relentless downpours meant a frustrating stretch of cancellations and rescheduled dates, but whenever the Bears finally got a break in the weather to play, the energy was unmatched.

The Blair softball team completely dominated the wet weather, putting together a stellar 17-9 record as they head into districts with plenty of momentum. Over at Krantz Field, Friday nights have been electric, with the varsity football team flying through the month with a strong 4-1 record, suffering only one narrow loss so far.

Inside the dry gym, the volleyball team has fought through a highly competitive schedule to capture a hard-earned 9-10 record. Meanwhile, the cross country team spent the month grinding through muddy trails, and the girls golf team consistently locked in on soggy greens. Both programs have put up fantastic performances and are officially ready for their own upcoming district tournaments. Best of luck to all the athletes through the rest of the fall season!

As the rain clears out for October, the focus is shifting over to the auditorium. The theater department has been rehearsing around the clock for the upcoming fall musical, "Something Rotten." You can catch this hilarious, high-energy comedy during its four-show run from October 29 through October 31, with evening performances at 7:00 PM and a Saturday matinee at 2:00 PM.

Please click here for a full list of events.

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