



# 2022-2023 Back to School Newsletter Information

## Superintendent's Message

Hello, and welcome to the beginning of the 2022-2023 school year! Hopefully, you all had a wonderful summer where everyone got a chance to take a break and recharge. We also hope that you are as excited as we are about getting back to school! On behalf of all the employees and Board of Education here at Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart Schools, I welcome you to the start of the new school year!

For our new families, let me once again introduce myself. This will be my third year as the Superintendent of Schools for BLHS. I'm honored and privileged to be part of this great organization that we have here at BLHS. I will be starting my thirteenth year as a school superintendent. Prior to administration, I was an elementary teacher in Albert Lea for 11 years. I was fortunate enough to start my teaching career in Nebraska where I received my experience through teaching in a one room schoolhouse for three years. I have been married for 31 years and have four wonderful children.

The administration and staff have been working diligently throughout the summer to prepare for the new school year. We are excited to have hired some excellent new teachers for this school year! They will fit in nicely with our current outstanding educators. We have waited all summer for the opportunity to work with you and your children once again! The first opportunity to meet the staff will be on September 1st from 4:00-8:00 PM, when both the Buffalo Lake and Hector sites host their annual Open House.

As always, every teacher in the District wants to be able to form a good student/teacher relationship with each and every student they have. Along with this is a positive relationship between the home and the school. If you have any questions or concerns, I encourage you to visit with your child's respective teacher at our open house or set up a meeting where a positive discussion can be held.

If you have any questions, do not hesitate to call the office of each respective building. Hector (Grades 6-12) (320) 848-2233, Buffalo Lake (PK-5) (320) 833-5311 or the District Office (320) 833-5311 ext. 241.

We are eager for the return of our students and look forward to an exciting school year. I wish you all a successful and enjoyable educational experience.

Dr. Michelle Mortensen  
BLHS Superintendent of Schools

## From the Desk of Mr. Pederson, K-12 Principal

On behalf of the entire BLHS staff, I am happy to welcome everyone to the 2022 - 2023 school year. We are looking forward to having another productive and successful school year. BLHS Public Schools provides a comprehensive academic program for all students that actively engage students in the learning process to acquire and develop the skills and knowledge needed for a lifetime of success.

We believe that working positively and proactively with students and their families will ensure that students achieve their highest potential. We recognize that students need support from both their home and school. We know that a strong partnership between home and school makes a difference in your student's education. I am requesting that you review the student handbook to familiarize yourself with the rules and processes that govern the daily operations of the school. The elementary and high school handbooks are posted on the district website at <https://www.blhsd.org>.

BLHS is excited to welcome new staff for the 2022-2023 school year

### **New Teachers**

Emily Sheehan- 3rd Grade  
Tally Clobes-5th Grade  
Allyson Carrigan- Elementary Sped  
Braden Cederstrom- High School PE/Health  
Cassidy Wiethoff-Ag  
Rebecca Reinhard- 7-9 English

### **Staffing Changes**

Erin Oldre-1st Grade  
Megan Horsman- 2nd Grade  
Katie Schumacher- 4th Grade  
Taylor Tollefson- Title I  
Heather Winkelmann- 7-8 Reading  
Derrick Schumacher- 7-8 Computer  
Dylan Gass- 7-9 Social Studies  
Joy Ahlbrecht- 10-12th English  
Dawn Haley - PSEO Supervisor/Media & Communications Specialist

I am thankful for the opportunity to serve the students, their families, and the BLHS staff and look forward to the start of the school year. Please contact me if you have any questions or if you would like to make an appointment to meet with me, your input is welcome. My email address is [cpederson@blh.k12.mn.us](mailto:cpederson@blh.k12.mn.us). I can be reached by phone at the following numbers:

Hector 320-848-2233 ext. 1304  
Buffalo Lake 320-833-5311 ext. 223

Best regards,  
Chad Pederson- BLHS K-12 Principal

## **Offices Open for the Start of School**

We invite you and your family to Open House on Thursday, September 1st from 4:00-8:00. During this time, you may turn in forms, complete registration for your student, receive your schedule, pay your child(s) iPad insurance, put money in their lunch account, or pay any other fees that night.

Beginning Monday, August 22nd the Elementary and MS/HS offices will be open from 8:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

## **BLHS Technology**

iPad Rollout for Grades 9th-12th grades will be on during Open House on Thursday, September 1st, from 4pm to 8pm in the Hector Media Center. Grades 6th, 7th, and 8th will leave iPads in their classrooms starting this school year and will not receive an iPad during the iPad Rollout. If you are unable to make it on the rollout day, your students will be able to receive their iPad on the first day of school. Before receiving an iPad our records must show that you have agreed to the iPad Acceptable Use Policy and paid/waived the \$40 iPad Insurance Fee. This does not cover an iPad that was intentionally damaged, a lost or stolen iPad, the iPad case, or the cord and charger for the iPad. The District offers a family cap option of \$100 for those families with multiple students. A reduced rate equal to half these options is available for those families on the reduced lunch program and one-fourth for those families on the free lunch program. If you decide not to pay the iPad insurance fee you will need to pay for any repairs. You can pay the iPad Insurance fee in Infinite Campus, at the District Office during business hours, and in person when getting the iPad.

## **Student/Parent Handbooks**

Please take some time to review the handbooks at both campuses as updates have been made for the 2022-2023 school year. The handbook is available online at [www.blhsd.org](http://www.blhsd.org).

The handbook outlines general classroom and building expectations. This information will be covered by classroom teachers and the building principals at the start of the school year. If you have any questions, please contact Principal Pederson or Assistant Principal Albers.

## **Attendance**

There is a direct correlation between student attendance and academic achievement. Therefore, students are encouraged to be in school all day, every day. There are times when students get sick, family situations occur, etc. and it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to call the office regarding any absences. It is MN State Law that a student of school age attends school every day. Attendance is monitored closely and reported to appropriate authorities as outlined in MN Compulsory Attendance Law.

## Meal Account Deposits

The breakfast and lunch program uses an automated computer system that allows you to deposit any amount in an account for your student. Students may use their account to purchase a regular school lunch and at the Hector Campus, they may also purchase ala carte items plus malts, juice or extra milk.

Lunch prices for K-5 are \$2.70, and 6-12 is \$3.05. Students in 6-12 may also purchase a Mega Mustang Lunch which is an extra entrée item for an additional \$1.25. Breakfast prices are \$1.80 for students in 1-5 and \$2.10 for students in 6-12, Kindergarten receives FREE Breakfast. If you do not want your child to have a la carte options please notify either of the offices, because this feature can be turned off. Families can deposit any amount in your account and your student will be notified when the account has \$10 or less remaining via email and by the use of the parent portal. Deposits can be made online through Infinite Campus. Hector campus: After the regular lunch, snack a la Carte items will be charged to your lunch account.

**\*\*\*Checks for lunch deposits should be made out to BLHS. Please put the student's name and lunch account number on the check.\*\*\***

**\*\*\*At negative ten (-10.00) dollars, your lunch account will be stopped and your student(s) will be served a sandwich and milk, or they may bring their own lunch. Lunch services will begin again when the account is paid up to the positive balance\***

## Emergency School Closing

In the event of a school closing, parents will be notified via text or voicemail, please make sure your information in Infinite Campus is current and up-to-date. If you are new to the District or do not remember your login information, please contact either the elementary office or MS/HS office and they will assist you.

## Infinite Campus Parent Access

BLHS uses Infinite Campus for its Student Information System (SIS). Contact Mallory or Meghan if you are not sure of how to log in or if you have forgotten your login information. This is the primary vehicle for parents to check on grades, assignments, and attendance, and get information delivered to you directly concerning your student.

### Elementary Office

Meghan Carlson  
(320) 833-5311  
[mcarlson@blh.k12.mn.us](mailto:mcarlson@blh.k12.mn.us)

### MS/HS Office

Mallory Sandgren  
(320) 848-2233  
[msandgren@blh.k12.mn.us](mailto:msandgren@blh.k12.mn.us)

## Busing & Transportation

Buffalo Lake – Hector - Stewart Schools furnishes bus transportation to all students who qualify. Students that need to ride a different bus than normally assigned should bring a note from a parent/guardian giving permission with instructions and give it to the office. Bus drivers will not permit unassigned students to ride the bus. If you know that your student will not be riding the bus for a morning pickup, please call the bus garage at 848-2237 before 6:00 a.m. and leave a message for the driver. The office may be able to let the driver know by radio, but no one is usually present to answer the phone before 7:45 a.m.

Riding a school bus is a privilege not a right and any student that is not behaving appropriately will not be allowed to ride the bus.

## Co-Curricular Activities

Please contact our activities director, Mr. Craig Albers, with any questions related to activities and athletics. Our hope is that all students choose to become involved in activities beyond the school day. Encourage your students to participate and get involved! If a student is going to participate in any event after school they must be present by 9AM! Please be aware that District and MSHSL policies are adhered to by BLHS. If the administration is notified of a violation, more than likely the student/participant will have a consequence. The following is a summary of the consequences:

### **Chemical Eligibility Rules (Alcohol, Tobacco, Controlled Substances)**

During the calendar year, regardless of quantity, a student shall not use or possess tobacco (including e-cigarettes). A student shall not consume or have in possession, with the intent to use, buy, sell, or give away, beverages containing alcohol or any substance defined by law as a drug. This includes any substance on a person, stored in a locker, desk, car, etc. It is not in violation for a student to be in possession of a legally defined drug specifically prescribed for the student's own use by his or her doctor.

- A. All students participating in activities associated with MSHSL, the penalty for the first violation will be ineligibility for two (2) weeks or 2 events, whichever is greatest.
  - a. A second violation will result in ineligibility for three (3) weeks or six (6) events, whichever is greatest.
  - b. A third violation will result in ineligibility for four (4) weeks or twelve (12) events, whichever is greatest. If after the third violation, the student on his/her own volition becomes a participant in a chemical dependency program, the student may be certified for reinstatement in the MSHSL activities after a minimum period of six weeks. The director or counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center must issue such certification.
- B. All students participating in other school sponsored activities not associated with MSHSL (FFA, Theater, Pep Band, Robotics, Clay Target, Prom, Dances, Music Trips, etc.) the penalty for the first violation will be ineligibility for two (2) events.
  - a. A second violation will be ineligibility for four (4) events.
  - b. A third violation will be ineligibility for twelve (12) events.
- C. Penalties shall be cumulative beginning with seventh grade, and throughout the student's participation on a varsity, junior varsity, or C-Squad team or activity.

- D. Denial Disqualification: A student shall be disqualified from all interscholastics athletics for nine (9) additional weeks beyond the student's original period of ineligibility when the student denies violation of the rule, is allowed to participate and then is subsequently found guilty of the violation.

A reminder that E-Cigarettes, Vaporizers (Vaping), synthetic drugs, and/or any substance used in the idea of it being a drug falls under these rules. MSHSL policy dictates that member schools can make their consequences more than what is given by the MSHSL, but cannot be lessened. BLHS has chosen, by a panel of head coaches and advisors, to make its consequences greater than that of MSHSL.

## **Academic Eligibility**

All students participating in extracurricular activities must make satisfactory academic progress. Satisfactory academic progress is defined as maintaining passing grades in all courses. Students participating in extracurricular activities will have their grades monitored weekly by the athletic director.

Teachers are required to inform the athletic director weekly of any student who has an incomplete or failing grade. The athletic director will monitor and track academic eligibility.

If a student has one or more failing grades at the end of a school week. The student will be placed on academic probation for one week. Students are able to practice and participate in competitions while on academic probation.

If a student on academic probation is failing the same class or any other classes after one week of academic probation, the student will be ineligible for competition. The student may practice and travel with the team. The student will remain ineligible for competition until that student has passing grades in all subjects.

Parents are reminded to log in to Infinite Campus via the school website to check on their child's respective grades. Don't just check over the overall grades, but make sure you click on each of the classes your child has to see a complete report for each class. Once a student is declared academically ineligible, they will not be able to participate (other than in practice) in any extracurricular events for the entire next week (Monday through Sunday).