
MEMO

To: Blue Ridge Board of Education
Mr. Ryan Peyton, Superintendent

From: Burton Huddleston, Principal, Blue Ridge Intermediate and Junior High School

Date: 4/10/2026

RE: Principal Report

UPCOMING EVENTS

April

- 2 Scholastic Bowl at GCMS @ 4:00pm
- 3 Good Friday-No School
- 7 JH Track Meet at Leroy JH @ 4:00pm
- 9 JH Track Meet at Ridgeview JH @ 4:15pm
- 9 Scholastic Bowl vs Edison MS @ 4:00pm
- 10 JH Spring Dance @ 6:30pm
- 11 JH Track Meet at Ridgeview JH Leon Keller Invitational @ 9:00am
- 13 Spring Music Concert (Grades 4-8) @ 6:30pm
- 15 JH Track Meet at Heyworth JH @ 4:15pm
- 16 JH Track Meet at GCMS @ 4:00pm
- 16 Scholastic Bowl at Tri-Valley MS @ 4:00pm
- 21 JH Track Meet at Leroy JH @ 4:00pm
- 23 JH Track Meet at Argenta-Oreana JH @ 4:30pm
- 24 BRIJHS Spring Play Performance @ 7:00pm
- 25 BRIJHS Spring Play Performance @ 7:00pm
- 26 BRIJHS Spring Play Performance @ 2:00pm
- 27 JH Track Meet at Fisher JH @ 4:15pm
- 27 School Improvement Day-No school for students
- 28 JH Track Meet at Tri-Valley MS @ 4:30pm
- 29 Scholastic Bowl Regionals TBA

May

- 1 JH SVC Track Meet at Fisher JH @ 2:00pm
- 2 Mansfield Alumni Banquet
- 5 Rain-date for SVC Track Meet @ 2:00pm
- 9 JH Track Sectionals at Ridgeview
- 13 JH Museum Open House
- 14 Spring Pops Concert @ 6:30pm
- 15&16 JH Track State Meet at East Peoria

- 18 8th Grade Promotion @ 9:00am
- 20 Last Day of Student Attendance-Dismissal at 2:20pm
- 21 Teacher Institute Day

Behavior

There were 23 behavior referrals written in the month of March. There were 42 referrals recorded in March of 2025. There was one out of school suspension in March.

ISA Testing and Spring iReady Benchmark

This month, our students participated in two important assessments that provide valuable insight into student learning and growth. Fifth and eighth grade students completed the Illinois Science Assessment (ISA), which emphasizes the application of scientific concepts and skills developed over time rather than simple recall of knowledge. As we review these results, we will continue to analyze our science instruction and curriculum as an area of focus for the upcoming school year. In addition, all students will begin the iReady spring diagnostic in reading and math on May 4th. This assessment allows both staff and students to measure growth since the fall diagnostic and reflect on progress toward individual growth goals. Through our curriculum and the support of the iReady learning path, our goal is for each student to meet their targeted growth, and we look forward to recognizing those achievements during our spring Academic Awards Ceremony.

Track and Field and Scholastic Bowl

Our junior high track season is off to a great start, with the team already competing in three meets this week. Athletes traveled to LeRoy on Tuesday, April 7th, and to Ridgeview on Thursday, April 9th, and will return to Ridgeview on Saturday, April 11th for a large invitational featuring numerous area schools. Our team is made up of 6th through 8th grade students, many of whom are participating in events for the first time this season, and we are proud of their effort and growth as they gain experience. The team will continue competing throughout the month of April and into early May, with sectionals scheduled for Saturday, May 9th as they work toward qualifying for the state meet the following weekend. In addition, our Scholastic Bowl team remains active, competing in both home and away matches, and will participate in regionals on April 29th with the goal of advancing to sectional competition.

New Staff

Blue Ridge Intermediate and Junior High School is excited to welcome two outstanding staff members to our team. Amanda Taylor has been hired as our new library aide and brings a high level of energy and enthusiasm to the role. Her previous experience as an administrative assistant with the University of Illinois football office, along with her work supporting the CEO program at Paxton High School, will allow her to bring a dynamic and engaging approach to our library services. We are also pleased to announce the hiring of Megan Hardesty as a 6th grade teacher for the 2026–2027 school year. Megan has served our building as a paraprofessional aide for the past 10 years and has demonstrated strong leadership through her involvement in our Athletic Boosters and various school committees. She has built meaningful relationships with both students and staff and will be a natural fit in the classroom.

April Exemplary Knights

Staff Recognition: **Melissa Whisman**

We are proud to recognize Melissa Whisman as our April Exemplary Knight. Melissa consistently goes above and beyond in service to our school, frequently stepping up as an emergency substitute whenever needed. She works tirelessly to support all students in our building, not just those on her caseload, and brings a positive, student-centered approach to everything she does. Through her work co-sponsoring Student Council, she builds strong, meaningful relationships with our students and helps foster a sense of community. We are truly a better school because Melissa is part of our staff.

4th Grade: Aaron Isaacs

Aaron has shown immense growth in several areas so far this school year. Aaron enters the classroom with his best foot forward, and has been giving his best effort on all assignments/assessments. Aaron is a kind and considerate friend, looking out for others and making sure everyone is OK. Aaron is passionate about the welfare of others. I can always count on Aaron to help me with whatever needs done and he's always willing to run an errand or two. I am very proud of the effort Aaron has put in towards his own growth, and I can't wait to see how far he goes! Congratulations Aaron!

5th Grade: Korbin Swigart

The 5th grade Exemplary Knight this month goes to Korbin Swigart. He continues to follow expectations and sets a great example to other students. Korbin gives his all in academics and even helps classmates when they are unsure. He will offer assistance to adults when he sees the need all while having a positive attitude. He exemplifies what respect should look like.

6th Grade: Oliver Poll

Oliver is a hard-working, ever-positive presence in our classroom. He leads by quiet example with kindness, and he is always willing to support others around him when needed. He completes his work thoroughly, consistently putting forth his best effort. He remains focused on himself and the task at hand. If there is good to be found in a situation, Oliver will find it. I'm grateful to have him in our class!

7th grade: Suzy Ellis

Suzy Ellis has shown many characteristics of the Exemplary Knight. She has demonstrated significant academic and social growth this year. She volunteers responses in class discussions and engages effectively in group activities. Suzy consistently applies herself to comprehending subject matter and successfully demonstrating her knowledge on assignments. She seeks assistance when encountering ambiguity regarding expectations or content. Most importantly, Suzy is willing to be taught. She is respectful towards staff and truly tries to learn what she is being taught from them. Her calm demeanor makes her a natural problem-solver and really shows off her maturity.

Suzy's leadership qualities are evident in her peer interactions. She offers to guide classmates through problem-solving processes in Mathematics, helping them gain understanding of the content. In English Language Arts, Suzy contributes her perspectives and concepts, often

initiating the discussion. This encourages her classmates to participate with greater confidence. She also offers assistance to peers who are struggling with following routines or are having a difficult emotional time.

8th grade: Meah Tieman

Meah, this Exemplary Knight Recognition is to celebrate the incredible person and student that you are. You consistently demonstrate a strong academic performance that includes impressive attention to detail and exceptional organizational skills. It is clear to your teachers that you take immense pride in your work and in who you are as a student.

Beyond your academic achievements, it is your genuine heart and warm personality that truly set you apart. Your constant willingness to help others does not go unnoticed. You take just as much pride in being a supportive, reliable friend to your peers as you do in your studies, making our school community a brighter and kinder place.

Thank you, Meah, for your brilliant mind, your compassionate spirit, and the standard of excellence you set both in and out of the classroom.