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Key Dates

- May**
- 27.....Memorial Day, no school
 - 28.....School board mtg., 7 p.m.
 - 30.....BHS Arts Showcase, 6 p.m.
- June**
- 3.....Gr. 6 band concert, 7:30 p.m.
 - 4...PRIDE diploma ceremony, 1 p.m.
 - 4...Gr. 6 orchestra concert, 7:30 p.m.
 - 5.....DES Gr. 5 celebration, 1 p.m.
 - 6.....Last day of school
 - 7.....BHS/PLC graduation, 7 p.m.



Retiring staff members contributed 310 years of service to the BHM community. See Page 2.



The BHM Portrait of a Graduate outlines the essential skills that students should acquire and develop during each stage of their PreK-12 education.

Portrait of a Graduate targets essential skills

Earlier this school year the Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose School Board adopted its first "Portrait of a Graduate."

The framework outlines the essential skills that BHM students should acquire or develop along each step of their PreK-12 school years, regardless of the path they plan to take after graduating.

It also complements the district's strategic plan, adopted in 2015, that sets broad goals in terms of life skills, whole child investment, pathways, and engagement by practically defining what the pursuit of those goals looks like.

'It gives us a common vision and definition of what we're all working toward.'

Pam Miller

Director of Teaching and Learning

"We want to make sure students are ready for the next stage of their lives when they reach that milestone and walk across the stage in June," said Superintendent Dr. Scott Thielman. "Whether they choose to go

to college or enter the world of work, we want to make sure that they're prepared to hit the ground running and make the most of their opportunities."

Within the Portrait, which is available on the district website (bhmschools.org/portrait-graduate), are clear descriptions of the skills expected of students at each stage of development.

"It gives us a common vision and definition of what we're all working toward, and it gives us a framework

See Portrait
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District retirees provided 310 years of service

A total of 11 retirees were recognized by Superintendent Scott Thielman and school board members for their dedication to BHM students and their years of service at a retirement luncheon on May 3.

Collectively, the group served the BHM community in various ways for 310 years.

Each one of these employees has played a valuable role in shaping the lives of students, both directly and indirectly, and has allowed students to **"dream, believe and achieve."** BHM thanks these retirees for their outstanding service, and for the impact they have made on students, staff and the broader community.



Retiring BHM staff members include, front row from left: Kimarie Tacke, Tracy Hulley and Terri Brummer. Standing, from left, are Richard Hoppe, Eric Ogren, Deb Schultz (retired last year), Greg Hygrell and Deb Ross. Other retirees not pictured here are included below.

Terri Brummer.....24 Years
PRIDE
Special Education Teacher

Richard Hoppe.....20 Years
Montrose Elementary School of Innovation
Custodian

Tracy Hulley.....30 Years
Buffalo High School
Social Studies Teacher

Greg Hygrell.....30 Years
Buffalo High School
Science Teacher

Roberta Kolasa.....29 Years
Montrose Elementary School of Innovation
Educational Support Professional

Eric Ogren.....33 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Custodian

Carla Orson.....32 Years
PRIDE
Educational Support Professional

Linda Proell.....37 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Special Education Teacher

Deb Ross.....31 Years
Montrose Elementary School of Innovation
Educational Support Professional

Deb Schultz.....16 Years
Buffalo High School
Educational Support Professional



Roberta Kolasa
(ret. 2023)



Carla Orson



Linda Proell

Kimarie Tacke.....28 Years
Discovery Elementary School
Kindergarten Teacher

Pomp and Circumstance

BHM programs planning June graduation ceremonies

BHS and Phoenix Learning Center
Friday, June 7 | 7 p.m.
Bison Field West

Buffalo High School (BHS) will have close to 480 graduates, with 18 graduates from Phoenix Learning Center. Each student has received six tickets for family and friends to watch the ceremony. In the event of inclement weather, the ceremony will move to the BHS main gym. A recorded telecast of the ceremony will be available. Others are invited to watch a live video broadcast in the air-conditioned BHS Performing Arts Center.

PRIDE Transitions
Tuesday, June 4 | 1 p.m.
Discovery Center Auditorium

Seven PRIDE Transition students will be honored in a Diploma Ceremony signifying that they have met and completed the program requirements. PRIDE supports students age 18-22 who are in need of additional services to make the transition from school to work and independent living. The ceremony is by invitation only.

Adult Basic Education
Tuesday, June 11 | 7 p.m.
Discovery Center Auditorium

At least 35 adults will receive their General Education Development (GED) diploma from the Minnesota Department of Education during the West Adult Basic Education (ABE) graduation ceremony in Buffalo. Approximately 120 other individuals will also be honored during an awards presentation for various other achievements and academic growth. The public is invited to attend the ceremony and reception following the event.

MCA test results are important for students, schools

In this edition of the Insider I will share some information about the legislative session, and also address a few questions about the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment (MCA) tests that students take every year.

The legislative session is coming to a close as I write this article. Most education-related activity at the State Capitol this year has focused on correcting and/or adjusting legislation from the past session that introduced many new mandates, several of which are unfunded. The main legislative focus in this session is the READ Act because of its sweeping mandates involving teacher training and curriculum.

One notable adjustment to last year's legislation holds districts harmless for a reduction in general education funding that is linked to the creation of universal free meals for students. The free and reduced lunch counts are linked to funding for school districts, and when the free meals act was implemented it caused a reduction in funding.



Scott Thielman

The reason for, and value of, MCA testing

Because MCA test results are published to provide a picture of how students and schools are performing, and because these results are used by various school ranking entities that are commonly used to compare the quality of one school or district to another, it is important for our parents and our community to understand why we administer the MCAs each year and how student opt-outs can affect the results. I sometimes get questions asking if the students are required to take the tests, as families are curious about their options.

Public schools in Minnesota administer the MCAs because the Federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires states to annually measure the achievement of at least 95 percent of all public school students. However, ESSA does not preempt state law on parental choice, and Minnesota allows parents to withdraw their students from participating in the tests. District Assessment Coordinator Rob Noshush sends out information to parents every year explaining the testing process and options.

Opt-out effects

While we use various methods to assess student performance and families have the option not to participate in the MCAs, lack of participation can have negative effects for students and schools. According to the Minnesota Department of Education:

- Individual students will not receive personal scores, removing a standard measurement of achievement that is common to their peers across the state. Educators agree that test scores do not tell the whole story in relation to student learning, but they do provide important direction in terms of teaching and learning.
- Students who do not participate in the statewide assessments are counted **"not proficient"** for the purposes of school and district accountability. This is because all eligible students are included in calculations regardless of participation. This means that test scores released to the public and used by various school ranking entities may be artificially low if there are a substantial number of opt-outs, resulting in an inaccurate public perception of a school's quality.
- Incomplete accountability information can lead to lost support opportunities for low-performing schools or recognition of high-performing schools.
- School and district assessment results are incomplete, making it more difficult to have an accurate picture of student learning.

Moreover, there are benefits of taking the test. High school students who receive a college-ready score on the high school MCA are not required to take a remedial, non-credit course at a Minnesota State college or university in the corresponding subject area, potentially saving time and money.

In recent years, about 60% of our opt-outs are at Buffalo High School, about 25% at Buffalo Community Middle School, and approximately 15% are at our elementary schools.

We want our students to do their best every day, and we strive to have our students do well on the MCA tests. Our "Portrait of a Graduate" focuses on ensuring our students have rigorous academic preparedness, have knowledge of opportunities that support their long-term aspirations, and build student agency to persist through obstacles. Every day our outstanding teachers create a strong learning environment so that our students can **"dream, believe and achieve."**

CIS courses save BHS students more than \$1.8 million

A total of 746 Buffalo High School students earned more than 5,400 college-level credits, amounting to savings of more than \$1.8 million, during the 2023-24 school year.

By partnering with both four-year colleges and two-year community and technical colleges, BHS is able to offer a regionally unmatched 35 tuition-free college-in-the-schools courses. These courses encompass a broad range of academic and career-focused subjects, including math,

science and history, as well as automotive maintenance, landscaping, animal science and more.

The number and variety of these courses doubles what is available at most surrounding school districts, and offers students unparalleled opportunities to get a head start on the college or career path of their choice.

For more about these opportunities, see <https://www.bhmschools.org/what-makes-bhs-unique>.

Proud Of...

Those listed below were submitted by district staff and recognized by the BHM School Board for their special contributions and accomplishments.



Claire Erickson



Aver McCallum

Claire Erickson and Aver McCallum, who are the 2024 Hall of Fame inductees for BHS. The award recognizes seniors for high academic performance, integrity, leadership, and making a positive impact on their school.



The Buffalo High School FFA Market Plan Team, which took first place at the 95th State FFA Convention. Team members are Lizi Vance, Melia Fischer and Kayla Heinz.



BCMS artist Kennedy Weiss, whose artwork on the right has been selected to represent District 37 at the "My District, My Minnesota" exhibition in the Minnesota Senate Building for 2024.



Yiqian (Lexi) Zheng, a senior at Buffalo High School, who has been chosen from a group of nationwide finalists and named a National Merit Scholar, an honor earned by less than half of 1% of seniors in the United States.



Nine students from Buffalo Community Middle School, who participated in honor bands on Saturday, May 4 at Zimmerman High School. The honor bands were hosted by the Minnesota Band Directors Association and were specifically designed for students who were in their first or second year of playing. Students in the First Year Band (above left) were, from left: Lydia Wurm, Aubrey Reinking, Lucy Kolkind, Owen Rehnstrand and Peter Karels. Second Year Band members (above right) were, from left: Ryland Muhlbauer, Maehli Gawtry, Josie Roehl and Trinity Poepeke.

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The Buffalo High School Varsity 2 Knowledge Bowl team, which took fifth place out of 17 teams in the AAA big school division at the State Knowledge Bowl Meet on April 12. Team members were, from left: Kumail Akram, Daniel Jungwirth, Eric Bajema, Lucas Lawrence and Dexter Huss.



BHS Business Professionals of America members, who competed in the BPA State Leadership Conference. Team members included Isabella Anderson, Avery Lowe, Sophia Carlson and Carolyn Rokke. They are shown above with advisor Christy Steinbach.



Buffalo High School seniors Anthony Leintz, Wyatt Jayson, Margaret Greenhagen and Oskar Carlson, who were selected by staff to attend the Students of Excellence award banquet in St. Cloud on Wednesday, April 24. Students were selected based on exemplary academic achievement, leadership skills and/or school/community involvement.



Anita Underberg, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and School Board, who was named the Minnesota Superintendents' Office Personnel Association Administrative Assistant of the Year.



BHS students selected for Minnesota All-State bands, choirs or orchestra, or who were selected as alternates. These individuals include Parker Carlson, Ellie Cassady, Adam Keranen, Avery Russek, Mitchell Friesz, Anna Wuollet, Julien Kariniemi, Maggie Bertsch, Jayde Hallman, Kiera McGorry, Will Gustafson, Carter Robertson and Michael Diaz (not pictured).

Proud Of...

Those listed below were submitted by district staff and recognized by the BHM School Board for their special contributions and accomplishments.



BCMS students who qualified for the State History Day Competition: Juniper Lostetter, Violet Ditlevson, Maryam Sonbol, Trinity Poepke, Bella Young, Sophie Durham, Jayla Loberg, Henry Winger, Abdullah Mudhafar, Miliya Chenvert, Lizzy Plaisted, Davis Kelm, Will Umhoefer, Elsie Johanson, LilyAnn Fix, Karston Perkins, Dallin Jerman, Chandler Kariniemi, Keon Mech and NoraMae Finke.



Fifteen current and former Quest students, who participated in the St. Cloud State Mathematics Contest on April 11. Above left, Mackenzie Koren (11th grade) placed third in her division, medaling in back-to-back years; eighth-graders Henry Umhoefer and Violet Ditlevson received honors for scoring in the top 5% in eighth grade; and eighth-grader Nicholas Berg scored in the top 10%. Umhoefer, Ditlevson and Berg took sixth place out of 22 other eighth-grade teams. All BHM individuals, shown above right, scored in the top half of participants. They included seventh-graders Luella Bagby-Flatla, Oliver Maenner and Maryam Sonbol; eighth-graders Nicholas Berg, Braeden Bezek, Violet Ditlevson, Trenton Elletson, Tanner Koren, Levi Summers, Noah Thompson and Henry Umhoefer; ninth-grader Jill Sherwood; 10th-graders Austin Elletson and Nolan Rabon; and 11th-grader Mackenzie Koren.



Martha Driscoll-Nelson, who was named the Minnesota State Gymnastics Assistant Coach of the Year by the MN Girls Gymnastics Coaches Association.



Twelve students who represented Buffalo Community Middle School in the Allegro Honor Band on April 19 at St. Michael-Albertville Middle School West. Those pictured here are, front from left: Liam Adams, Evelyn Diethelm, Karina Wuollet, Emma Smude, Iona Whitney and Savannah Mahn. In the back row, from left, are Isaac Watrud, Yahir Martinez, Trenton Elletson, Alexis Burgess, Sabrina Friesz and Connor Smude.

Portrait

from Page 1

of how those skills scaffold up from preschool through 12th grade," said Pam Miller, Director of Teaching and Learning for BHM Schools. "This is something that can unify every single employee and help them see how the work they do fits into a student's graduation in the end."

Beyond school employees, the document also provides an overview of the district's educational goals in the areas of rigorous academics, opportunity knowledge and student agency, and presents those goals in a form that families and the broader community can easily navigate.

"We want parents to see that we're in partnership with them," said Miller. "It provides a bigger picture of how what they may be working on at home can complement what we're doing at school. For local business owners, this outlines the skills that they would want in their future employees. It's important to show how we are working to develop those skills in our PreK-12 system, with the hope that many of our students stick around and contribute to the community in positive ways."

A working document

While graduate profiles have become more popular among school districts in recent years, those documents are often limited to a handful of attributes that a student should possess, such as strong skills in critical thinking, collaboration, communication, etc.

Miller said it was important that the BHM Portrait of a Graduate contain enough substance to make a meaningful impact on the way the district structures its practices, rather than simply serving as a collection of educational buzzwords. So how is the BHM Portrait different?

"I think ours has more depth to it," Miller said. "We don't want it to be something we adopt, make into some nice posters, and then it just sits on a shelf."

In the process of formulating an outline, district administrators found that much of what they were working toward was already well laid out in the AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) career and college readiness system, which the district



Portrait of a Graduate

Rigorous Academics

Students develop academic skills and can successfully complete rigorous college and career preparatory curriculum and experiences.

Writing

Communicates ideas, demonstrates learning and deepens understanding.

Inquiry

Clarifies, thinks critically, and conducts proficient academic investigation.

Collaboration

Communicates effectively and works effectively and with groups.

Organization

Manages materials, time and thinking with proper tools and prioritization.

Reading

Engages in critical reading to deepen understanding in all texts.

Opportunity Knowledge

Students research opportunities, set goals, make choices that support their long-term aspirations, and successfully navigate to the next level.

Developing Future Readiness

Develops financial literacy and a professional profile, and monitors digital footprint.

Building Career Preparedness

Develops an awareness of personal fit in terms of career selection, and plans education and career path based on personal goals.

Advancing College Preparedness

Explores and plans education path based on personal strengths, skills, interests and goals. These plans are informed by an understanding of college admissions, as well as financial considerations.

Student Agency

Students believe in themselves and act intentionally to build relationships, persist through obstacles, and activate their academic, social, emotional, and professional knowledge and skills to reach their potential.

Building Relationships

Establishes and maintains positive relationships that create a physical and digital network of support.

Persisting Through Obstacles

Monitors progress toward long-term goals, seeks assistance and feedback when necessary, and develops a strong voice to self-advocate.

Activating Knowledge and Skills

Carries a strong sense of identity, develops and employs leadership traits, and thinks critically, behaves safely and participates responsibly in the digital world.

The place to dream, believe and achieve.

This poster, now displayed in all BHM school buildings, outlines the essential skills that all BHM students are working to develop. Specifics of how these apply at each level of development are available at bhmschools.org/portrait-graduate.

already uses in both school-wide and class-specific settings. So, with some tailoring for local practice and need, the district adopted the AVID outline with its comprehensive framework.

Equally important in the development of the Portrait was an ability to measure progress toward the ideals it outlines. Accordingly, administrators have begun to collect data this year to set a baseline understanding of strengths

and needs, and adjustments will be made as necessary.

"The adoption of this Portrait is an important step that helps our staff share with students, their families and our community what we aim to achieve," said BHM School Board Chair Melissa Brings. "It is a window into our educational objectives, and will remain an important guide to our educators for years to come."



SCHOOL BOARD

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Repertory Orchestra shines at showcase

Thanks to meticulous preparation that enabled an outstanding performance at regions, the Buffalo High School Repertory Orchestra gained a statewide audience and critical acclaim in April.

The ninth-grade ensemble under the direction of Kristine Wiese took the stage for the State Festival Honors Concert at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis on April 15. Only eight ensembles from around Minnesota were chosen for the showcase based on their performances at regional competitions, and the 2,085-seat auditorium was filled to capacity for each school's performance.

"It felt surreal, almost, just being in that big of a space that was that important," said Cora Smiglewski, a viola player.

One of the benefits of the state festival was that musicians had the opportunity to rehearse on the Orchestra Hall stage and break into sectionals led by members of the Minnesota Orchestra in the afternoon prior to the evening showcase.

"We had to work really hard for this. The reward was a once-in-a-lifetime experience," said Wiese. "Seeing their faces after they got out of sectionals and coming off that stage – they realized the significance of what they were doing. It was just a really proud moment to be up there with these kids."

Abridged article
Scan to read
the full story



Members of the Repertory Orchestra show off their state showcase trophy.



Rolf Mohwinkel, the band's longest-serving director from 1970-1993, returned as a guest conductor for "The Stars and Stripes Forever."

Band program marks 100 years of music

On May 2 the Buffalo High School band program put a triumphant accent on the 100th anniversary of its founding with a Centennial Concert.

Throughout the evening, Director Scott Rabehl thanked those who have led and supported the band program over the years. Several past high school directors, including Lee Kjesbo, Alison Hase-man, Mike Knutson and Rolf Mohwinkel, attended the program.

"I've been around a

while and I've heard lots of (band programs). This is one of the finest in the state of Minnesota. You have to be very, very proud of this," Mohwinkel told the audience.

In addition, the oldest known alumnus of the band, Lucille Decker, was recognized. Decker played trombone in the band from 1937 through 1941.

Video available
Scan to watch
the full concert

