



VOTE ★ VOTE ★ VOTE



2020 School Board Election: Nine Candidates, Four Open Seats

As district residents look at this year's full election ballot, they will not only vote for US President, senator, representatives, mayor, county commissioners and city council members, but they will also choose from nine BHM School Board candidates. There are four open seats on the board with three incumbents seeking re-election. The four successful candidates, after Election Day on November 3, will serve four-year term.

We want to be sure you are educated on your choices. Candidates were asked to provide answers to the following questions. Below are their responses, in their own words. **Find the FULL interviews at www.bhmschools.org.** (*Denotes Incumbent)

Adam Bjorklund
Buffalo, MN



Occupation:
Financial Advisor

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board:

I have deep roots in the Buffalo community. My parents and grandparents were born and raised in this community. Having my own family carry on that tradition is important to my wife and me. I also married into a family of educators, which has given me an even great-

er sense of appreciation for school staff. My commitment to and history with this wonderful town is what drives me to want to do more by being a member of the school board.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

I've always been very driven to serve others. Prior to becoming a financial advisor, I owned other small businesses in the Twin Cities area. During that time, my leadership skills allowed me to manage a large staff, while still maintaining a "family feel." By blending my passion to serve with my financial background, I feel that I am an excellent candidate for the school board.

***Melissa Brings**
Buffalo, MN



Occupation:
Self-employed

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

I am passionate about serving the students and residents of our district to ensure each student is given the best educational experience possible. I believe in, value, and understand the importance of our strong educational system and want to continue to be an active part of it.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

This is my 13th year of having the privilege to serve on the BHM School Board. While on the board, I have served on many committees/organizations some of which are; Schools for Equity in Education, Safe Schools, Safe Communities, multiple hiring teams, contract negotiations for all but one bargaining group, and more. I am known for asking probing questions and looking for alternative ways to do things. I take my fiduciary responsibilities as a board member very seriously and have consistently conducted myself in an ethical and legal manner while doing what is best for students. In addition, I have been a successful business owner (with my husband) for 22 years. I handle all financial and operational aspects (accounting, customer management, insurance, licenses, etc.) as well as work in the field as needed.

Dave Casey
Buffalo, MN



Occupation:
Retired Teacher from BHM Schools

The Start of a Unique, New School Year

"Back to School." Those words are so familiar and bring to mind memories of shopping for school supplies and new outfits for the first day of school. This year's first day of school was certainly not familiar. When school ended last June, we



Scott Thielman

immediately started to think about what school would look like in the fall. All school districts needed to develop three learning models—In-person (all students in school), Hybrid (half the students attend school each day) and Distance Learning (all students learn from home). The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) provided weekly, sometimes daily updates with guidelines and requirements for the three learning models. Our staff worked hard all summer to make sure we were in compliance with state requirements and that our schools and classrooms would be safe for the return of our students and staff.

On July 30, school districts were notified by Governor Tim Walz that the learning model we would use for the start of the school year would be determined by a formula using the number of COVID-19 cases reported in a 2-week period per 10,000 residents of Wright County. According to the data table (see the parameters chart below) and based on the county case rate of 12.13, our elementary students would return for In-Person Learning and our middle and high school students would return for Hybrid Learning. We knew our parents would be supportive since 83.5% of them had indicated on a survey that they wanted their children to attend school in person. Additionally, any parent could choose distance learning for their child(ren). As we had been planning for the three possible learning models (In-Person, Hybrid and Distance Learning) for the return of students, we now knew what additional preparations had to be made.

In preparation for the return of students and staff, school floors were marked with stickers to direct traffic and space out 6-feet of distance in the halls. Classrooms were rearranged. Lunchrooms were configured to provide for cohort (same group) seating. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and sanitizing products were purchased. The state provided a cloth mask for each staff member and student along with a supply of disposable masks. We also made preparations for our students who had chosen to participate in Distance Learning. Families who made this decision committed to having their children learn from home through the first semester, January 29, 2021. Technology devices were also made available along with free meals for those who requested them.

As all these preparations were taking place, we realized our staff needed more time to develop their learning plans so the first day of school was delayed by two days to Thursday, September 10. To help students become familiar with the new safety protocols, we had a staggered start. On Thursday, September 10, students in grades K-5, 6 and 9, with last names starting with L-Z, had their first day of school. On Friday, September 11, students in grades K-5, 6 and 9, with last names starting with A-K, had their first day of school. On Monday, September 14, and Tuesday, September 15, students in grades 7, 8, 10, 11 and 12 had their "1st day of school" (under the Hybrid Learning Model) and joined all the other students. We are pleased to say we had a smooth start to the 2020-21 school year. We want to acknowledge that this is due to the hard work, commitment and dedication shown by our amazing staff.

School has been in session now for four weeks and we have learned a lot and made adjustments along the way. As our community has individuals who have contracted COVID-19, we know that we have to be prepared for students and staff who may also test positive for COVID-19 and how that may impact our students and staff. In preparation

for this, the district hired Briana Tschaekofske as the Health and Safety Coordinator. In this role, she will be the District COVID-19 Coordinator and will work with staff and families in navigating the requirements for quarantining and following the MDH Decision Tree if someone is experiencing the symptoms consistent with COVID-19. (Read more about Tschaekofske and her position on p. 4.)

Maintaining a healthy and safe learning environment is our highest priority in our school district. Equally important is that everyone follows the safety strategies at home, in their personal lives. It's the choices we make at home that will dictate how long we will be able to keep students in our schools.

The key to the successful start of the 2020-21 school year is definitely due to the extra efforts put forth by all of our staff—from our custodians who are doing extra cleaning, to food service who are safely providing meals every day, to ESPs, office staff and administrators who work side-by-side with students and families, to our teachers who are providing the very best education experience possible in all three learning models. If you know or see a BHM employee, please thank them for their dedication. They are truly the "essential workers" of Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose schools who have put students first so that they will continue to **dream, believe and achieve** in BHM schools.

Learning Model Parameters	
Number of Cases per 10,000 Over 14 Days, by County of Residence	Learning Model
0-9	In-Person Learning for all students
10-19	In-Person Learning for elementary students; Hybrid Learning for secondary students
20-29	Hybrid Learning for all students
30-49	Hybrid Learning for elementary students; Distance Learning for secondary students
50+	Distance Learning for all students

Proud Of....

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



Buffalo Community Middle School students, Daniel Jungwirth and Kumail Akram (pictured left to right) who received an Honorable Mention at the National History Day Competition in the Junior Group Performance, "The Xinhai Revolution: Breaking the Barrier of China's Dynastic Tradition." This happened at the end of the 2019-20 school year and was recognized by the BHM School Board in June 2020.

School Board Election, p. 1

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

Being a member of the school board will allow me to use my expertise as an educator and my active community involvement to work for the best solutions for all students, teachers, staff and families. I will be able to use my experienced educational voice to allocate resources to meet the needs of all students. I will ensure the resources are used wisely in accordance with state and federal requirements and guidelines.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

Worked in BHM as an educator for over 30 years. I know what it takes to make schools work from the ground up. Involved in curriculum design, budget planning and growth. Coached sports and academic teams in our school district. I see the big picture and understand the education system. The willingness and confidence to make tough decisions. I am passionate about public education. Well-grounded in community affairs. Great communicator and listener.

Eric Ellwoods

Montrose, MN



Occupation:

Building Engineer

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

I would like to serve on the school board to give back to the school district and the greater community for all they have done for my children.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

I am even tempered and all about finding balance. I have worked in schools, have students, and am a citizen. I feel we can be creative and accomplish the goals set before us.

Brad Elo

Buffalo, MN



Occupation:

Executive for a Large Software Company

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

Preparing our Kids for the Future: To many, technology change is something that just happens to us, a passive participant. But to me, it is an opportunity to turn what

is passive into active decisions. I've spent 20+ years in the high-tech space, adding my voice to the board will bring that expertise and help our community become an active participant in the future.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

I'll bring creative problem solving based on my decades of high-tech experience, active listening and learning from our world class teachers, administration and community members, with a keen eye towards innovation and the fiscal discipline required to ensure equity among all our students.

Amanda Lawrence

Buffalo, MN



Occupation:

Customer Service and Corporate Training

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

I have a passion for education and our amazing schools. I love that our district has a wide variety of programs and activities for kids of all different interests and life goals. I want every student to be able to find classes and activities that ignite their passion, make them feel like they belong, teach valuable skills and give them confidence about how their unique talents can take them into the future. We have excellent teachers and staff and I want to ensure that District 877 continues to be a place where outstanding people want to work. The combination of my skills, vision and dedication to education make me uniquely suited to be an effective member of the school board.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

I would bring the same energy and focus to the school board as I have in my countless volunteer hours in the schools and on the 877 Scholarship Foundation Board. I am a hard-working, detail-oriented, level headed team player. I am an excellent communicator who takes every point of view into account when making decisions. I am ready to use these skills to help move our school district forward.

*Susan Lee

Buffalo, MN



Occupation:

Retired BCMS 6th Grade Teacher

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

I am passionate about education. I have devoted my career to BHM schools. My classroom and many graduate classes further developed my curriculum and classroom management skills. Serving on the School Board has enabled me to learn and understand the "other" sides and considerations important to the educational process. As a board member, attending a number of workshops and training sessions has broadened and deepened my understanding of the state requirements and financial side of running a district. Serving as a Mentor Mom for the Mothers of Preschoolers during the last 16 years has also kept me in touch with challenges young families face.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

I am not a politician – I am an educator. I have served and chosen to run again for the Board of Education because of my love for our students and the communities our District serves. With my years in teaching and subsequent years on the School Board, continued service on the board is the best, most effective way for me to serve our BHM community.

Stan Vander Kooi

Buffalo, MN



Occupation:

Retired Farm Management Teacher Currently Farms 150 Acres

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

I want to continue the high-quality education that encourages each student to explore a wide range of career options. In today's world there are many career choices that our students need to be aware of. I want to see our schools thrive during these challenging times.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

I have worked with many farm families in the last 40 years doing business planning so I understand financial statements. I have held leadership positions like chairman of our church of 400 members and local organizations like the Wright-Hennepin Corn Growers and the Wright County Fair. I am also the incoming treasurer for the Minnesota State FFA Alumni Association. Plus, I have managed my own farm for the last 40 years.

School Board Election, p. 3

***Dave Wilson**
Buffalo, MN



Occupation:
Retired Financial Advisor

Why do you want to serve on the BHM School Board?

I was involved with the district long before I became a Board member. It has become a calling of sorts because of all the relationships I am so fortunate to have developed.

What qualities will you bring to the school board if you are elected?

Fiscally minded yet committed to doing what's best for the students. My business background helps me with being able to work with individuals and groups.

Scan the QR code with your cell phone to read the FULL candidate profiles on our website at bhmschools.org.



Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools

The place to dream, believe and achieve.

Welcome to BHM Schools

New District-Wide Health and Safety Coordinator

The safety of our students and staff has always been BHM School District's number one priority. To assist with the health and safety of our district, the district hired Briana Tschaekofske to serve as our district's Health and Safety Coordinator. Her primary task for the district is to also serve as the COVID-19 Coordinator. She will be the point person through this pandemic and will help guide the district through all the COVID-19 related protocols.



Tschaekofske graduated in 2011 from St. Cloud Technical and Community College with an Associate of Applied Science Degree in nursing, earning her LPN (Licensed Practical Nurse) license that same year. In 2019 she graduated with a degree in Health and Human Services Management from St.

Mary's University. She has worked the last seven years in the health care field and has experience working with patients, managing medical guidance for illness and injury, ensuring proper use of PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) and collaborating with leadership teams on projects.

She is just over one month on the job and Tschaekofske has jumped in with both feet. "Things are going very well," shares Tschaekofske. "Because I have a nursing background, I am able to provide health-related guidance that is needed during this pandemic. I have experience following the sometimes complicated and ever-changing guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and translating it for others. Since starting in BHM Schools on September 14, I have been working closely with the district nurses, administration and staff, and everyone has been so helpful and support-

ive. It's a good feeling to know the work that I am doing is helping keep our students, staff and communities safe."

Tschaekofske will not only help guide BHM Schools through the pandemic, but her position will also deal with the management of many other health and safety-related issues including leading the BHM Health and Safety Team, staff training sessions and working with the district health offices.

Superintendent Scott Thielman says this is an important position to have in the district. "We are very excited to have Briana on board. Many of her responsibilities were under the direction of our Buildings and Grounds Director John Heltunen. Now he can focus on the maintenance and operations of our facilities while Briana focuses on the health and safety of our students and staff within our facilities. She is a great addition to our team and we are very pleased to have her expertise during this pandemic."

New Teachers Start the 2020-21 School Year

This year, over 25 new teachers were hired around the district to replace those who have retired or moved on to other opportunities. As a precaution for COVID-19 and physical distancing standards, a large group photo was not possible this year. The following is a list of new teachers by school.

Buffalo High School: Magdeline Amon-Physical Education; Shanlee Braun-Counselor; Sydney Driver-English; Tess Evens-Special Education; Trista Klein-

steuber-Special Education; Alicia Malewiczki-Physical Education; Joel Riopelle-Math
Phoenix Learning Center: Magdeline Amon Physical Education
Buffalo Community Middle School: Ashlynn Claseman-Special Education; Danielle Kelm-English; Carly Pruszinske-English
Hanover Elementary: Kristine Johnson (Long-term Sub)-Kindergarten
Montrose Elementary School of Innovation: Faith Bila-5th Grade; Kaitlyn DeBeer-Special Education; Kathleen Holmes-Speech/Language; Natalie Rich-

ards-3rd Grade
Northwinds Elementary: Courtney Hinz (Long-term Sub)-Kindergarten; Kathleen Holmes-Speech/Language; Kallie Statema-Special Education
Parkside Elementary: Malorie Davidson-1st Grade; Kirsten Rausch-Art
Tatanka Elementary STEM School: Emily Dockendorf-Special Education; Emily Heidelberger-Music; Brittan Neiderhiser-Art
Special Education: Cirissa Afonia-Early Childhood Special Education; Erica Kindt-Middle School Nurse; Mary Theresa Schmitz-SEBS Coordinator.

Making the Move: Phoenix and PRIDE, Transition

Phoenix Learning Center (PLC) opened its doors at 800 8th St NE in Buffalo in the late 90s. It is an alternative high school program serving students in the BHM School District. The program has seen some changes over the past 20+ years, but the fall of 2020 saw its biggest change yet with the program moving to Buffalo High School (BHS).

A redesigned block of rooms in the main upper corridor of BHS is the new home for PLC. The move promotes equity of access for all students in regards to course options and electives, counselors, the health office, Library Learning Commons, School Resource Officer/administration, tutoring, gym facilities, cafeteria options, substitute teacher coverage, and alignment of interventions for students needing support. PLC and BHS administration believe this programming shift will allow for better utilization of the five administrative personnel while maintaining their small class-size/school feel.

PLC programming centers around the idea that ALL students can learn, and when learning challenges arise, a more individualized personal learning approach is taken



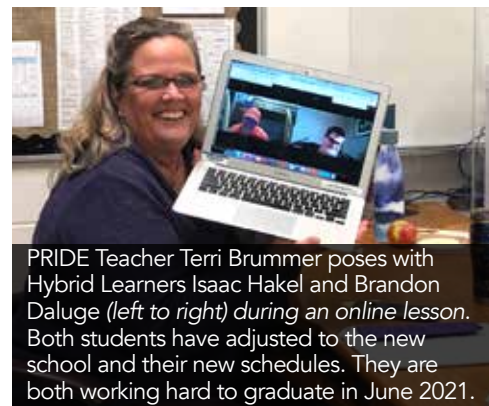
PLC teachers, staff and students participate in a sharing exercise in one of three redesigned classrooms that makes up PLC now located in BHS.

with each student. PLC has a flexible, yet structured learning environment with high expectations. Students often describe PLC like a "family," which supports student achievement. They have the ability to help and support each other, create a culture and partner with the community.

Some of the main goals of moving PLC are to make sure students feel safe and welcome at school, stay enrolled in school and are successful upon graduation. Stephanie Ward, PLC/BHS Assistant Principal, shares, "Students and families of PLC were informed of the change, and families were contacted individually to discuss and ask questions. The most important part of this program is the people. This shift can be likened to moving a "family" from one home to the next. This shift will make both of our schools stronger and better."

PRIDE Transitions

The PLC vacancy allowed for the PRIDE Transition program to move in. PRIDE is a specially designed instructional program for students with disabilities ages 18-21 that provides a transition from the high school environment to the community or post-secondary educa-



PRIDE Teacher Terri Brummer poses with Hybrid Learners Isaac Hakel and Brandon Daluge (left to right) during an online lesson. Both students have adjusted to the new school and their new schedules. They are both working hard to graduate in June 2021.

tion. Previously the district leased space in the downtown Buffalo Lakeside Mall for the PRIDE program. The PRIDE and PLC transitions, overall, will result in a cost savings to the district.

PRIDE Teacher Terri Brummer used to teach in the building when it was PLC and now is back in the building with PRIDE. "I feel like I have really come full-circle," says Brummer. She went on to share how the move will benefit the PRIDE program and the students in multiple ways, including: more open spaces inside the school, outside yard space, a larger kitchen, increased bathroom spaces, additional storage, more cohesive classroom spaces for multiple purposes, improved security systems, outside raised gardens and an improved drop-off/pick-up location for transportation.

"In light of the situation we are all in right now with COVID-19, our students are adjusting extremely well to the new school and new safety rules," Brummer shares. "They are developing more tolerance to mask wearing and to their hybrid schedules. And while we miss our downtown, central location, we are still within walking distance to some restaurants and resources for our students."

The State of Middle and High School Activities

Walt Disney said, "There is no magic in magic. It's all in the details."

The activity events that happen in our district often times just seem to "magically" happen, but there are hundreds of details, behind the scenes, that need to happen to make everything run smoothly and effortlessly.

This year COVID-19 has hampered many district sports and activities due to strict guidelines that are in place to keep participants and spectators safe. Luckily, enough accommodations have been made to make most of the fall sports work for the middle and high schools such as soccer, cross country, girls tennis, girls swim/dive, football and volleyball.

While many of the mentioned fall sports are close to wrapping up their seasons, the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) reversed their decision about making football and volleyball wait until spring. High

school volleyball will play 13-14 matches which began on October 8, and will run into December. High school football began on October 9 and will play six regular season games. Because football is outside, they are allowed 250 spectators (most of that is taken by parents of the players) and in a last-minute action by the MSHSL, each volleyball player went from zero spectators to being allowed two spectators in the stands. Many of the events can be seen on Youtube or NFHS Network for a subscription of \$10.99 a month or \$69.99 for the year (www.nfhsnetwork.com).

Winter sports will follow the same standards that have been set for the fall, leaving many student and community spectators searching for alternative viewing opportunities to cheer on their Bison teams.

Buffalo High School Activities Director Tom Bauman says he is happy to put in the extra

work because kids are getting to play and participate. He says, "There is no substitute for being in-person. If we have to move to Distance Learning, everything will shut down. There is a tremendous amount of details and challenges executed in mitigated activities from placing pylons in the parking lot to arranging chairs for players in a particular way to making sure cameras are working for the live streams. I am hopeful that we can continue to offer programs throughout the rest of the year."

Buffalo Community Middle School Assistant Principal and Activities Director John Hayden knows the importance of kids getting out of the house and being active. He adds, "We are doing everything we can do—SAFELY. So far our participation numbers have been about the same as in the past and we will continue to work hard to keep kids involved."





Meet the **new BHM Health and Safety Coordinator** who spends most of her day navigating COVID-19 around the district (p. 4) and walking countless people through our **COVID-19 Decision Tree**. Find the tree by clicking on the QR code on the left. The BHM COVID-19 Decision Tree is derived from the one provided by the Minnesota Department of Health.

*****ECRWSS**
RESIDENT DISTRICT 877

Upcoming Events

Tri-M Talent Show

The Tri-M Honor Society All-School Talent Show, scheduled for **Saturday, October 24** is MOVING from the BHS Performing Arts Center at 7:30 p.m. to the Buffalo Sturges Park Band Shell at 4 pm. The performance will be FREE. Bring a blanket or lawn chair and enjoy the show! There will be a 250 seating limit in the designated area in front of the band shell. People are welcome to enjoy the performances outside that area, physically distanced. In case of bad weather, the

band shell is reserved for the performance on Sunday, October 25 at 4 p.m.



Halloween Family FUN October 31



This year's Boo Bash is a much more scaled back version of itself due to COVID-19 restrictions. Some activities will still be happening on Saturday, October 31. Check them out!

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|----------|---|
| 1-2 p.m. | ECFE Halloween Crafts |
| | Discovery Center-North-Side Picnic Tables |
| 2-4 p.m. | Buffalo Merchant Trick-or-Treat |
| 4-6 p.m. | Halloween Dance-Opening Doors |
| | Discovery Elementary Gym |

Purple listed items are FREE. Cost is \$7 per person for the Opening Doors (adults with disabilities) Halloween Dance. Space is limited so register soon! Register online at bhmschools.ce.eleyo.com or call 763-682-8770 for more details.

Swing Dance Canceled

The Veterans Day Swing Dance by BHS Jazz I and North Hennepin Community College Big Band scheduled for Saturday, November 7 has been canceled due to COVID-19 concerns.

School Board

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| Dave Wilson | Chairperson |
| Sue Lee | Vice Chairperson |
| Melissa Brings | Clerk |
| Laurie Raymond | Treasurer |
| Ken Ogden | Acting Clerk/Treasurer |
| Amanda Reineck | Director |
| Bob Sansevere | Director |
| Sydney Rhodes | Student Representative |
| Scott Thielman | Superintendent |

INSider Editor:

Laura (Barta) Lindquist, Communications Coordinator
763-682-8783 | lbarta@bhmschools.org

Reader comments or questions welcome!

Coming Soon to a "Radio" Near You

COVID-19 is forcing everyone to get creative, which is a perfect challenge for the Buffalo High School (BHS) Theatre Department students. This year, rather than a regular theatrical play performance in the BHS Performing Arts Center, a cast of 14 students will perform the classic "original adaptation" of Charles Dickens *A Christmas Carol*.

The show will NOT run November 19-21 as stated on the BHM District Calendar. The show will air sometime in December. More information will be shared as to the date, time and where audience members can listen in. Stay tuned!



Calendar Updates

We will do our best to keep you updated on all of the canceled or postponed events around the district. We will do so through future *Insiders*, the district website (bhmschools.org), school Twitter feeds, and the district, Community Ed, Early Childhood Family Education and school Facebook pages.

