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Annual Report 2021 — 2022

Blue Ridge's Mission



Blue Ridge Middle School is committed to academic excellence for all students in order to encourage them to be successful, responsible, and productive citizens. We recognize the importance of providing a climate where students' academic, social and emotional needs are met. We are dedicated to providing a climate of high expectations and caring human relationships.

Blue Ridge Middle School Celebrates 50th Anniversary

In the fall of 2021, Blue Ridge Middle School celebrated its fiftieth opening. On September 30,

2021, the BRMS administration hosted an official re-dedication ceremony. Staff who had taught throughout the years were invited to return for an open house event. Many of the current staff, 22 of whom attended Blue Ridge as students themselves, visited with their former teachers and administrators. A highlight of the evening was also the dedication of the Lightner Library named in honor of Sheila Lightner-Nakles. Ms. Lightner worked at Blue Ridge for 46 years and served as librarian for 42 of those years. Her library was the heart and soul

of the school, and we were so proud to honor her with this new name. On May 12, 2022, at the culmination of our fiftieth year educating western Loudoun adolescents, BRMS hosted a commemorative Spring Festival. Staff displayed yearlong student projects emphasizing our fiftieth theme and offered activities, such as S'mores, Cupcake Wars, and Science Hands-on Activities, to observe the day. The evening concluded with the dedication of the fiftieth time capsule, to be "buried" in the interior of the school and to be opened in the 2046-2047 school year when the school turns 75. The Board of Supervisors also issued a proclamation recognizing May 12, 2022, as Blue Ridge Day. A great year was had by all!



Dr. Zeigler, Mr. Serotkin, Dr. Ellis, Mr. Bell, and Mr. Martinez at re-dedication ceremony



The dedication of the Lightner Library

Blue Ridge: Past and Present—Culture of Excellence

Blue Ridge Middle School opened on former farm land on the south side of Purcellville in 1971. This new middle school, serving grades six through eight, was the feeder school to Loudoun Valley High School. As the end of the 20th century saw an increase in the need for more classrooms in Western Loudoun, several expansions and a major renovation in 2005 aligned the architectural design with the new middle schools being built in other areas of Loudoun County. Blue Ridge currently has a student population of 850 students.



County Publication of the County Publication

Blue Ridge Middle School: Selected A School to Watch Four Times

Blue Ridge Middle School stands firmly behind the values espoused in its mission statement. Students at Blue Ridge Middle School are valued members of our school community. You can truly see our mission statement in practice if you walk the halls of our middle school.

Teachers work diligently to promote student achievement. They develop dynamic, engaging lessons during their CLT meetings and create common assessments to gauge student learning. Our staff embraces PBL opportunities to link content to our community and world. Our English staff believes strongly in student agency. Students are given choices in their writing then students work through a student-led writer's conference with their teacher. Visit a science classroom to see students stretching their critical thinking skills in an inquiry-based science lab. These are just two of the many examples of our mission statement at work.

Teachers, administrators, and all staff members value the importance of relationship building for the middle-level learner. From the Name Game to our unique Club Schedule to our PBIS activities, our staff and students all thrive on the meaningful and successful relationships we have developed.



Parent as Educational Partners (PEP)

This is why Blue Ridge Middle School was re-designated during the 2019-2020 school year by the *Schools to Watch* organization as a high-performing middle school. With a concerted effort to meet the unique developmental needs of the middle-level learner, Blue Ridge Middle School promotes academic excellence, social equity and ensures that our organizational structure and instruction are developmentally responsive to the needs of our students. These categories are the core criteria used to earn a school this designation.

In our Annual Report, we will highlight the various ways Blue Ridge Middle School excels in the aforementioned categories. Selected Schools to Watch criteria can be found throughout this document.

Academic Growth and Excellence by Grade Level

House A

We are sure that all 281 8th graders enjoyed being fully back in the school building after either virtual learning and/or hybrid learning during their 6th & 7th grade years. Our students were excited to reconnect with peers that they had missed seeing and form friendships with new students. The teachers welcomed them with engaging, rigorous lessons and many hands-on activities. English 8 had an excellent year helping students to grow their reading and writing skills! Between literary analysis of contemporary fiction of speculative fiction, a deep dive into literary nonfiction, comprehensive studies of argumentative writing, in-depth studies of journalism, and entering a variety of writing contests to stretch students' creative writing skills, students are prepared for the throes of high school! In Physical Science, students began their year learning about elements on the Periodic Table with several chemistry experiments. They then transitioned to learning about physics, conducting experiments to learn about waves, electricity, force, and motion. Students are looking forward to constructing and racing balloon powered cars, an annual Blue Ridge tradition. In Civics, students were engaged all year in writing responses to current events issues through Reactive Readings. Highlights also include researching the Virginia governor's race and tracking the Stock Market for 2 weeks. In Math classes, students worked to strengthen their mak vocabulary. They also were challenged to solve difficult equations. In the various levels of World Language classes, students demonstrated language competency in several manners. They created various presentations and videos, wrote books about themselves, created restaurant skits, explored cultural landmarks, homes, and traditional cuisine, "shopped" for clothing and furniture online, took virtual tours of homes and designed dream homes, and described fashion. In Music courses, students focused on critical vocabulary to prepare for county-wide assessment performances in March, where they



House A: Eighth Grade students

House l

Sixth graders had a year filled with creative and collaborative learning across all content areas. All year, House B was covered in student displays of academic work celebrating Blue Ridge's 50th Anniversary! During the year in Science, students performed various hands-on experiments to highlight the concept for each unit, for example, creating Save the Bay poster which highlighted animals and plants on the Chesapeake Bay and how we can protect them, and drawing the layers of the atmosphere and unique properties of each layer. In History, students created illustrated Revolutionary War Timelines, and researched a historic site of their choice - they could go worldwide! In Mathematics, during October students used fraction division and measurement skills to create pink ribbon badges for a school-wide 'pink-out' in recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. In February, students explored with the I-Robots and coding to create images reflective of Blue Ridge's 50th year anniversary. These were on display during the Spring Festival on May 12. Max Burrus, 6% Grade Foundations of Algebra student, participated in the Klidwind Competition where he and his teammates used their math skills and knowledge to create a Wind Turbine. Max and his team even advanced to the National Level! Max said that his knowledge of measurement, fractions, and Algebra helped with his success in the competition. In Language Arts, students reflected on BRMS What You Do Matters motto in relation to themes such as family, change, compassion and charity using Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol, with an emphasis on taking action by giving back to our local community during school charity food drives and volunteer activities. Students also created Blackout Poetry using the words from an existing text (their own books or a classic novel) and then designed an image that represented their words, resulting in a gallery of poems for the Spring 50th Festival!



House B Sixth Grade students Art activity

House C

In US History, we kicked the year off with US Geography and then headed into the study of Reconstruction and Westward Expansion Due to the pandemic, we were unable to have our Geography Bee this school year but look forward to having it again next year. We were so excited to celebrate our Decades Day project and celebration that highlighted important events through the decades. History and English collaborated lessons on research, plagiarism and citing sources. Decade groups then created skits or newscasts to perform in front of class, complete with costumes and props. Decades Day was an educational and fun way to end the school year with teacher-led stations on the Space Race, the Fall of the Berlin Wall, Dancing through the Decades, an obstacle course in Berlin, and Woodstock picnic lunch. In English, students honed their writing skills through work in a variety of genres, including research-based argument, literary analysis, short stories, and poetry. They also worked toward self-selected writing goals, both in their choice of genre and their choice of skill to develop. They celebrated short stories through sharing with peers across classes, culminating in a prize-winning story for each class. In addition to reading a variety of independent books, they participate in three student-led book clubs to discuss both their responses and the author's craft with their classmates. This year the English and Social Studies departments collaborated on the Decades Day research project, which will be celebrated in a day-long event in June. In Life Science, we enjoyed the year getting back into group work and hands-on science. The students really enjoyed learning about characteristics of life, ecology and biomes. Students explored these topics by using microscopet to take pictures of the microscopic world around them, competing in March Mammal Madness and by dissecting both earthworms and frogs. We are ending the year by investigating all the biomes of the world in which life can be found. In Foundations of Algebra, studen



House C: Seventh Grade Science

lessons which teaches students that their mindset is more important than initial ability in determining progress in math. Students experienced mathematical discourse in the classroom through Braintraining problems which allowed students to use words, symbols, diagrams, physical models, and technology to present and defend their ideas. Students researched celebrity net worths and created games for a probability carnival. In Pre-Algebra, students worked hard on a multitude of areas of math to prepare for Algebra. Students designed a house using composite figures, enjoyed solving word problems, and played probability games along with many other educational activities. In addition, students worked with Loudoun Valley Honor Math Students to enhance their understanding of content, while they applied order of operations skills in making a clock that reflected how they used "their time", a city map utilizing their understanding of angles, writing equations, and slope. In Algebra I, students were challenged to solve difficult equations in math and worked to strengthen math vocabulary.



Recognizing and Promoting Excellence

Student Award Winners

STEM SUMMIT Foxcroft:

All-Girls Stem Team: Sophie Schober, Norah McCormick, Stella King, and Sarah Bader

Continental Math League winners:

6th Grade: 1st- Eleanor Avent 2nd- Hugh McCormick 7th Grade: 1st- Jack Gorczyk 2md- Abhirvey Rangwala 8th Grade: 1st- Norah McCormick 2nd- Rowan Haws

Odyssey of the Mind: BRMS Team Shadowclan wins First Place at Virtual States

Team Members: Adeline Lo, Beatrix Maybury, Catalina Nemes, Hannah Taylor, Katelyn Haggard, Sally Sullivan, and Violet Lo

BRMS spelling bee winners:

Norah McCormick, Champion Hugh McCormick, Runner-Up

Malone Foundation Award:

Art- Katie Marsh Math- Saisanketha Bharatula Science- Luke Weller Music- Adriana Milan Dance- Elaina Crabtree

Debbie Mueller Award:

Ashley Willits

Bulldog Award:

Sienna Dhillon Josh Anderson

Academies of Loudoun Attendees:

Juliana Jensen, Josh Anderson, Connor Mraw, Charley Pagano, Elijah Popp, Luke Weller, Oscar Little, Julia Miller, Rowan Haws, Jolyon White, Abigail Winn, and Tyler Metz

Scholastic Writing Awards Regional Winners

Gold Key Winners

- Acadia Kincaid
- Grace Madsen
- Norah McCormick
- Jolyon White

Silver Key Winners

- Sarah Bader
- Ella Stevenson

Honorable Mention

- Charlotte Abbe
- Joshua Anderson
- Abby Mae Edwards
- Levi Kneeland
- Kylie Luke
- Julia Miller
- Jo Myzk
- Emma Sabin
- Sydney Sheehan



STEM SUMMIT



Odyssey of the Mind



Spelling Bee Winner and Runner-Up



Scholastic Award Winner
Back row left to right: Kylie Luke. Mr. Eric Kursman,
Levi Kneeland, Jo Myzk, Charlotte Abbe, Josh Anderson,
E.J. Sabin, Sydney Sheehan, Mia Erickson, Abby Mae
Edwards, Julia Miller, Mrs. Susan Keller. Front row
from left to right: Grace Madsen, Ella Stephenson,
Acadia Kincaid, Norah McCormick, Sarah Baden, Jolyon
White



Schools to Watch Criteria

- All students meet high academic standards.
- Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and appropriate academic interventions are aligned with high standards.
- The curriculum emphasizes deep understanding of important concepts and the development of essential skills.
- Instructional strategies include a variety of challenging and engaging activities that are clearly related to the grade-level standards, concepts, and skills being taught.
- Teachers use a variety of methods to assess and monitor the progress of student learning.
- The faculty and master schedules provide students time to meet rigorous academic standards.
- Teachers know what each student has learned and still needs to learn.
- The adults in the school are provided time and frequent opportunities to enhance student achievement by working with colleagues to deepen their knowledge and to improve their standards-based practice.

Virginia Naturally School

Blue Ridge Middle School continues to be a Virginia Naturally School. The 2021-2022 school year represented our 16th consecutive designation. The goal of the school program is to recognize efforts

undertaken by Virginia schools to increase environmental awareness and stewardship of its students.

Competition Awards

P.A.W. Patrol Wins Step-up Loudoun Competi-

Ten students from BRMS took on and won, the \$1,000 firstplace prize, for the Step-up Loudoun Challenge. This competition is organized by Loudoun Youth, Inc. and it tasks studets with identifying a problem in their local community and tasks with dethem



veloping P.A.W.





a solution.



The



The P.A.W. Patrol from Left to Right, Back row: Steve Wolfson (director of Step Up Loudoun), Adriana Milan, Joshua Anderson, Abigail Winn, Kate Stone, Ryan Barrett, Caleb Nicholson, Stacey Metcalfe (Executive Director and CEO of the Westmoreland Davis Memorial Foundation) and Kam Woodall. Front row: Sarah Bader, Rowan Haws, and Chris Tricarico.

(Protecting Against Wastefulness) team focused on the need to reduce, reuse, recycle, and refuse at the school level.

Cornerstone Awards

Blue Ridge Middle School is committed to recognizing student achievement and effort through our Cornerstone Awards program. Each quarter, grade level teams selected one male and one female student from his or her team to be recognized during the Cornerstone ceremony. Students were awarded a Cornerstone pin, BRMS bumper sticker, and a BRMS bulldog pennant. Additionally, students celebrated their Award each quarter with a Leadership Lecture and Breakfast. Our presenters this year Mr. Dickersheid (LCPS), Mayor Fraser (Town of Purcellville), and Chief McAllister (Purcellville P.D). The Cornerstone categories include: citizenship, effort, scholarship, leadership, as well as academic achievement in math, reading, and writing.



Mayor Fraser speaks to Quarter 2 recipients

Department Awards

Continuing rich academic traditions at Blue Ridge, staff members recognized 2021-2022 8th grade department winners in ten categories. These categories included: math, science, social science, English, word languages and cultures, physical education, fine arts, technology education, family and consumer science, and spectrum. These students represent an elite group of our most dedicated learners at Blue Ridge Middle School. Students were honored by having their names engraved on a plaque that will be displayed in the halls of BRMS.





cial Equity at BRMS

Blue Ridge Demonstrates Social Equity

- Teachers continually adapt curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling to meet their students' diverse and changing needs.
- Students have ongoing opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultures.
- The school community knows every student well.
- The faculty welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families and makes sure that all its families are an integral part of the school.
- The school's reward system is designed to value diversity, civility, service, and democratic citizenship.
- Staff members understand and support the family backgrounds and values of its students.

Bulldogs Give Back!!

Career and Technical Education students at BRMS apply Project Based Learning to support local organizations that help animals.

The project spread across all three grade levels and all Career and Technical Education middle school courses. Ms. Myers, Ms. Sheilian, Mr. O'Connor, and Ms. Whalen, who were the teachers that collaborated and planned a Student-Led Philanthropy Project to benefit animals that are housed in local shelters. Students created infographic to elicit donations of pet supplies, made pet supplies, like enrichment mats, food/water bowl holders, and dog treats. The packaged treats



Mr. O'Connor's Tech Ed 8 class created Dog Bowl Holders that will be donated to the animal shelter.. Back Row, Left to Right: Sarah McFadden, Matthew Hile, Dylan Ceppi, Ryan Barrett, Mr. O'Connor. Fron Row, Left to Row: Austin Mosier, Jason Ventikos, Chris Tricarico, Sam McClintic

provided donations that were used to buy needed items for the shelters. Two hundred food items, twenty-five bags of treats, twenty-five toy items, and over fifty miscellaneous items were donated in total.

BRMS Environmental Club

The BRMS Environmental Club is student run club that led the way to our school collecting 1,711 pounds of plastic bags to donate to TREX in an effort to reduce the amount of plastic bags that end up in landfills.



BRMS Environmental Club: From Left to Right. Back Row: Julia Mendez, Charlene Pagano, Shelby Reece, Acadia Kincaid, Ella Stephenson, Lola Hansen, Sydney Sheehan, Mrs. Susan Hubbuch, and Mrs. Martha Midolo. Front Row: Rowan Haws, Beckett Finn, Abby Jackson, Grace Madsen, Frances King, Ella Phelps, and Ellie Lowman.

Unified Mental Health Team

The Unified Mental Health Team offers mental health services and supports to enhance student social, emotional, and behavioral growth. This team of school-based mental health professionals works with students, families, and school staff to support student success and their ability to cope with challenges.

The Unified Mental Health Team continued to provide a variety of services and resources to students and families. Classroom lessons were delivered to each grade level on a variety of topics, including Stress Management, Sources of Strength, healthy habits, college/career investigation, and healthy relationships. The Signs of Suicide program was presented to 8th graders to teach students how to identify the signs of depression and suicide and what to do when a student needs help.

The Unified Mental Health Team works to ensure Tier 1 interventions are occurring throughout the building. The UMHT facilitates multiple student groups including Am-



Sources of Strentgh

bassadors, PEER helpers, Sources of Strength, and Student Equity Ambassadors-each of these groups actively contributes to help foster a positive and safe learning environment. The UMHT facilitated 8 small counseling groups with students throughout the year. These groups offered support to students in the areas of anxiety, stress management, social skills, cognitive flexibility, executive functioning skills, and self-esteem.

Veterans Day

Our Veterans Day celebration was outstanding! The activities allowed our students to learn about our country, its history, and participate directly with our campus flag planting. Students viewed a video about staff members who have served in the armed forces and then planted his/her own flag on our campus. Finally, all students and staff signed banners for local veterans.



Planting flags for Veterans

Safe School Ambassadors and Peer Helpers

The school counselors continued our Safe School Ambassador and Peer Helper programs. These programs support our school's positive climate. Students learn how to intercede in challenging situations, and they model appropriate interactions. Students also learn strategies to encourage positive behavior and kindness.

Blue Ridge Middle School Demonstrates Developmental Responsiveness

- Bulldogs: What you do matters!
- Interdisciplinary teams meet each week to talk about students and to meet their needs
- Name Game: All students are known!
- Teachers and staff members facilitate activity period clubs that connect to student interests
- The Blue Ridge Technology Center offers professional development to train teachers to in high quality project based learning to support Loudoun County Public Schools' One to the World initiative
- The Safe Schools Ambassadors program supports PBIS and a safe and positive school climate
- Content enrichment clubs and teams (Mathletes, Odyssey of the Mind, Continental Math League 6, 7, & 8, Academic Decathlon) challenge students academically
- Common Sense Media recognized BRMS as a digitally responsible school

Blue Ridge Cooking Team





The BRMS cooking team competed in the *Real Foods for Kids Culinary Challenge*. They were the only middle school to enter a breakfast and lunch item with the Confetti Skillet Bowl and Payne's Farm Hash dishes.

Music Awards

- All-District Band: Cole Lucas, and Adriana Milan
- All District Jazz Band Char Coleman
- All-County Orchestra: Wyatt Lechliter
- Solo & Ensemble Superior Rating: Adriana Milan, Henry Shelmerdine, Josh Anderson, Rowan Haws, Kamber Woodall, Max Stolarski, Haven Palmer, Makenna Miller, Jonah Janisko, Alex Olechnovich, Emmy Ross, and Izzy Stubbs
- Solo & Ensemble Excellent Rating: Adriana Milan, Cole Lucas, Ellie Lowman, and Ashleig Sabin

Chorus Awards

- All-State Honor Choir: Oscar Little, Norah McCormick, Charlotte Abbe, Andrew Doyle, Ryan Descenzo, Elyse Rath, and Sonia Arbab
- All-District Chorus: Gabriel Davis, Oscar Little, Sawyer Clark, Andrew Doyle, Charlotte Abbe, Norah McCormick, Julia Miller, Zindel Garcia, Lilly Tester, Ava Smith, Sonia Arbab, and Caroline Titerington
- All-County Chorus: Ryan Dascenzo, Aiden Culkowski, Madison Smith, Addison Mosher, Isi Panico, and Elyse Rath







BRMS Band Performs at LVHS Game

BRMS Science



Student project growing seeds from space

BRMS Clubs

Blue Ridge Middle School prides itself on being socially equitable and developmentally responsive to the needs of its middle school students. BRMS does this not only through teaming and different grade level Houses, but through Wednesday Activity Periods. Every staff member at Blue Ridge Middle School helps by sponsoring a student club.



PTO Sponsored Soccer Club

With over fifty clubs to choose from, students are sure to find something that sparks their interests. Each Wednesday, clubs meet the last half hour of the day.

This is an opportunity for students not only to have a fun and unique learning experience, but also to develop and sustain meaningful relationships with adults at BRMS through their middle school journey. Additionally, the amazing BRMS PTO sponsors several after school clubs that have a high rate of student participation.

Spectrum: Future City Competition

Ms. Sharp's 8th block Spectrum class placed 3rd in the international STEM Future City Competition. This competition requires that each team

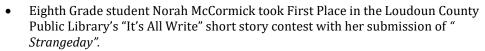


8th Block Spectrum

submits a project plan, write a 1500 word essay, build a scale city model from recyclable materials with at least one moving part, create a 7iminute presentation video, and participate in Q&A session with a panel of judges comprising of engineers.

Recognizing and Promoting Excellence

Bulldogs Excel Beyond the Classroom





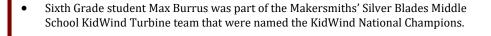
Norah McCormick

 Eighth Grade student Delaney Sheldon had her poem, "Threats, Not Peace!" published online through Skipping Stones



Aarva Arui

Seventh Grade student Aarya Arun became the youngest Archer to win the Lancaster Archery Classis.
 Aarya currently holds four USA Archery National Records.





Gabe, Kam, and Ella

 Eighth Grade students Gabe Davis, Kamber Woodall, and Ella Stevenson were each awarded a \$975 scholarship from the Leesburg Garden Club to attend a two week session of Nature Camp in Vesuvius, VA







2021-2022 PTO Sponsored Drama Productions The Trial of Goldilocks and Mary Poppins Jr.



The Trial of Goldilocks



Mary Poppins Jr.

Thanks to the BRMS PTO our students were able to hold a Fall and Spring drama production. Our students and staff produced two high quality productions that showcased the numerous talents and extreme dedication of Blue Ridge Middle students and PTO. We are so proud of the cast, crew, and performances that we witnessed on the auditorium stage!



Blue Ridge Middle School Demonstrates Organizational Support

- The master schedule includes for common planning time for both interdisciplinary teams and content learning teams
- The administrative team offers grants to promote enhanced instruction
- The Blue Ridge PTO offers grants to deepen activities and academics
- Content Learning Teams create SMART goals and Focus File Database to provide a structure for student improvement and achievement
- Master Schedule incorporates Math Lab and Structured Resource in response to student needs for modeling of concepts, structure, and organization
- Administration manages Teacher Walk-Through Database to inform more focused professional development

Blue Ridge Middle School's Improvement (SIP) Plan at Work

The Blue Ridge Middle School SIP was centered around student achievement, growth, and creating a safe and supportive culture and climate. Working with the Unified Mental Health Team through participatory groups, analyzing MAP, SOL, and achievement data, Blue Ridge Middle School staff and students met and exceeded their goals for the 2021-2022 school year.

Fun Activities



Eighth Grade Wins the Students v Staff Basketball Game



Tough Turkey 3k Winners 6th Grade: Finn Bradley and Ashley Sabin 7th Grade: Sam Edwards and Noelle Cates 8th Grade: Caleb Nicholson and Alyssa Tribino

Bulldog Mile Winners







- 8th Grade: Brady Colio and Morgan Greene
- 7th Grade: Sam Edwards and Fallon Fetterolf
- 6th Grade: Finn Bradley and Ashley Sabin

PTO Support

Once again, the BRMS PTO proved to be an invaluable support system to our students and staff. The PTO raised money and allocated funds through PTO grants that serves our students on a daily basis. Thanks to the PTO, all 3 grades enjoyed a night of festivities at Ida Lee Park. Thank you to all our sponsors and the PTO!!!







Left: 8th Grade Picnic Middle: 7th Grade Decades Day Right: 6th Grade Field Day