



At a Glance

Page 2

BHS spring play
Legislative update
PTO groups

Page 3

Student honors
Staff honors

Page 4

Student honors

Page 5

Scholarship dinner
ECFE Family Fair
BCMS open house

Page 6

Geologist returns

Key Dates

April

3-7.....Spring break, no school
10.....School board workshop
11.....MESI Innovation Night
13.....877 Endowment pork
chop dinner, 4:30-7 p.m.
14.....Two-hour early release
20-22.....BHS spring play
22.....ECFE Family Fair, 10 a.m.
24.....School board mtg., 7 p.m.
27.....BCMS open house, 4 p.m.
27.....NES Gr. 2 musical, 6:30 p.m.
27.....BHS Strings and All
That Jazz, 7:30 p.m.



A huge pep band was just part of the herd that filled 21 fan buses to support the boys basketball team at state on March 21.



Ground level

Geologist returns to where it all began

Sometimes the student becomes the teacher, but in the case of Danielle Olinger, the student has become the expert outside consultant.

The 2005 graduate of Buffalo High School, now

a geologist with the U.S. Geological Survey office in Denver, Colorado, returned to Buffalo Community Middle School in February to guide eighth-grade Quest students through a

challenging simulated field geology activity.

Olinger, who has also visited a number of times

See Geology
Page 6

From the Superintendent

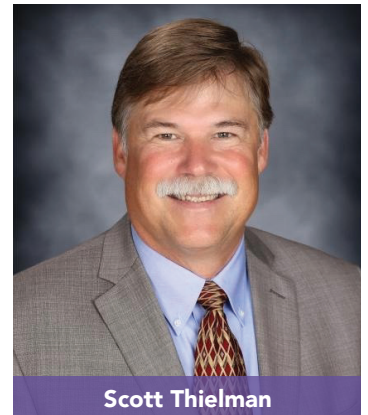
Schools await state decisions on education funding

In the last edition of the "Insider" I explained how the political rhetoric about fully funding public education is inaccurate. I will continue that discussion in this article as we await the final funding targets from the Legislature and the governor. As of the submission of this article, we are still waiting for the Minnesota House of Representatives

and Senate to finalize their funding targets for the state budget. The hope is that when the funding targets are determined, priorities will be identified and appropriate funding will be dedicated to those priorities.

So far the Legislature has passed more than 1,000 bills, and we will not know the full

See Thielman
Page 2



Scott Thielman

BHS presents 'Twelfth Night'

Buffalo High School's spring play, "Twelfth Night," will run Thursday through Saturday, April 20-22, in the Performing Arts Center.

A cast of 18 students, supported by 14 crew members, is preparing for the production.

"We were planning to do this show in 2020, and then the pandemic hit and we were closed just three weeks before opening," said director Debb Bestland. "At least one student was cast in that show and is returning to finish what she began!"

About the show

The comedy by Shakespeare tells the story of Viola, who is separated from her twin brother Sebastian. She disguises herself as a boy and goes to work for the



Duke or Orsino, whom she eventually falls in love with.

Orsino, however, is in love with the Countess Olivia, and sends the still-disguised Viola to court her for him. Things go wrong when Olivia falls for Viola instead, and confusion reigns when Sebastian arrives. In the ensuing flood of mistaken identity, Sebastian marries Olivia, and resolution finally occurs when Viola reveals her true

identity and marries Orsino. Among those developments are a variety of entertaining shenanigans by the servants.

"It's a well known Shakespeare Comedy. Our script is cut to make it more understandable, but all the necessary Shakespeare moments are there," said Bestland.

- Purchase tickets with the QR codes above, or at the door.

PTO groups engage and support

Did you know that several BHM school buildings have active and robust Parent Teacher Organizations?

Their mission is to enhance the overall environment at these schools by bringing together parents, students, teachers and community members.

This is accomplished by planning events and activities designed to stimulate community involvement, giving families additional opportunities to be involved in their child's education, and generating funds that facilitate

See PTO
Page 5

Thielman

from Page 1

outcome of the legislative session until May 22. That timeline is problematic because school districts have to make budget decisions in April. Needless to say, we were hoping to have more clarity on the funding situation earlier in the session.

Education organizations have estimated that if all the bills passed in the legislative education committees were approved, school districts would face budget reductions because they could not afford to implement the requirements. It is a fine line that the Legislature needs to walk as it provides the necessary funding without passing unfunded policy bills that take away the funds as soon as they are approved.

Legislative and local matters

One bill that would not take away any funding for school districts is House File 1271, which would provide property tax relief for school districts across the state by adjusting operating referendum equalization aid based on property values. I testified in favor

of this bill because it would provide tax fairness, and it would also provide BHM residents with a reduction in our operating levy of approximately \$1.2 million. This bill and HF 1396 (equalization aid for debt service and bonds) would be a tremendous help for our property owners.

At the local level, BHM Schools passed a five-year operating levy in 2019, which must be renewed this fall if we are to maintain our current class sizes and programs. In addition, the district must continually maintain, repair and update its facilities. We are in the process of assessing our needs, and will provide additional information regarding this assessment in the future.

Free meals and priorities

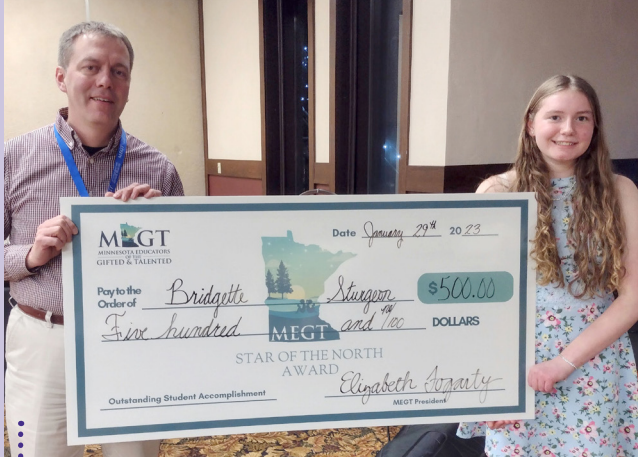
The governor has signed the bill providing universal free meals for all public school students. If not carefully handled, it will mean less funding for school districts because the state will no longer have the mechanism that it uses to determine compensatory education funding. There is a one-year hold-harmless provision, but what is needed is certainty. Increasing the state's education funding formula and

erasing the special education funding deficit is the priority of Minnesota school districts. This is the most reliable way for school districts to determine budgets, and in turn determines the level of staffing and class sizes.

Contact a legislator

Advocating for our students, parents, staff and community is a daunting task, but we must help our lawmakers understand the impact they have when they enact unfunded policies, or underfund school districts that are charged with implementing those mandates. Parents and residents can help by contacting their local legislators and advocating for public school funding.

I am confident that our residents are tired of hearing me write and talk about budgets and our financial situation, but it is extremely important for you to know how we are able to hire staff and provide opportunities for our students, and how your tax dollars are spent in BHM Schools. Our district mission of **"making a difference by preparing all students for a successful future in a changing world"** guides our decisions, and allows our students to **"dream, believe and achieve"** their goals.



Bridget Sturgeon, BCMS eighth-grader, who received the 2023 MN Educators of the Gifted and Talented Star of the North Award for outstanding accomplishment in academics, visual or performing arts or leadership.



All-State Choir members, who recently performed at Orchestra Hall. They are, from left, Drew Elo, Xander Sabinash, Lucas Bokusky, Olivia Carey and Amelia Schmidt.



BHS Music Listening Team members Lily Cooper, Elle Keranen and Jocelyn Geib, who qualified to compete against teams from Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin and Utah at the 2023 MN State Music Listening Contest.



Emily Pearson



Miranda Weber

Emily Pearson and Miranda Weber, who were recognized for their work as Pyramid Model Demonstration Classrooms by the MN Department of Education for 2022-23. Staff recognized for their work in 2021-22 were Jen Robeck, Tina Jeske, Renee Kalinowski, Annette Rabusch and Dana Pearson.



BHS one act play cast and crew members, who in the words of judges gave a "very powerful" performance of "Bury the Dead" in state competition. Only eight schools advanced to state in Class AA.



BHS Mock Trial members, who qualified for state for the third time in as many years, and competed at the Federal Courthouse in St. Paul.



Members of the BHS Knowledge Bowl team, who recently qualified for the upcoming state competition. From left are Coach Brandon Aldrich, Amelia Butler, Matthew Scherber, Milo Zimmerman, Ryder Zvorak, Avery Thompson and Coach Ryan McCallum



Gymnasts Audrey Strike and Kaylee Dehmer, who qualified for the state individual gymnastics meet.



Members of the boys swimming and diving team, who qualified as individuals for state. Qualifiers, shown here with teammates, were Ty Kosek, Cooper Polzin, Cayler Roder, Rylan Close, Noah Wittke and Mason Pilcher.



Wrestlers Jonah Anderson and Aiden Herbst, who qualified for the state wrestling tournament as individuals.



The BHS boys basketball team, which captured the section title and returned to the state tournament for the first time since 2014. The boys were also named Section 8AAAA Academic Team Champions.



BHS senior Nate Dahl, who became the school's first Mr. Basketball finalist after a season in which he reached 1,000 career points.



The 877 Scholarship Foundation's pork chop dinner is a tradition that now spans almost three decades. Proceeds provide scholarships to numerous students, helping them to achieve their post-secondary goals. This photo is from the 2013 event.

Pork chops for scholarships April 13

The 877 Scholarship Foundation is sponsoring its 29th annual Scholarship Pork Chop Dinner on Thursday, April 13, from 4:30 to 7 p.m. at Buffalo Community Middle School. All proceeds support Buffalo High School student scholarships. Last year, the 877 Foundation was able to award \$92,547 in scholarships to 84 high school seniors.



Order NOW!

A pork chop meal is \$12, a meal with two pork chops is \$17, and a hot dog meal for kids is \$5. All meals include baked beans, applesauce, chips and dessert. Curb-side order/pick up will be available

at the main entrance. Purchase tickets early by scanning this QR code with your phone camera (www.877foundation.org/events), or buy them curb-side.

BCMS to host Spring Open House

Buffalo Community Middle School will host its Spring Open House from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 27.

All are welcome to enjoy a variety of activities and events. Information booths will share about various programs and opportunities available to BCMS students, including Student Council, Wolf Ridge, and options in athletics, arts and clubs.

A taco-in-a-bag meal is free to all families, and two ice cream trucks will be on hand to sell desserts.

Activities throughout the event include sticker making in the art room, chalk art outside Door 1, games in the

gym, "Minute to Win It" games by Team Tatanka, "Are You Smarter Than a Sixth-Grader" with Team Blizzard, and a Kahoot Quiz with Team Northstar.

Tentative event schedule

- 4:30 – Students teaching orchestra in the orchestra room.
- 4:45-5:05 – Deputy Davis will speak on internet safety in the Family Room.
- 5:10-5:30 – Jazz band performance in the Mall and a game in the gym.
- 5:40-6:00 – Choir performance in the Mall.
- 6:10-6:30 – Game time in the gym.

PTO

from Page 2

student learning by supporting special needs and activities. PTO groups are run by a parent volunteer board with insight and input from the building principal.

• If you are interested in helping with a PTO group at your school, or in starting a PTO at a school that is not currently served by one, contact your building principal for more information.

Instagram drive

The Tatanka PTO

invites you to follow along on Instagram! If the group gets 200 followers, it will give each Tatanka classroom teacher \$50 in Scholastic dollars to purchase items. Scan the QR Code here to follow.



Family Fair, give-aways highlight Week of the Young Child

Celebrate Week of the Young Child April 17-22 with BHM Early Childhood Family Education. Staff will draw one currently enrolled student's name per day for fun give-aways. Follow BHM Schools Early Childhood Family Education on Facebook to be included.

Family Fair set for April 22

The ECCE Family Fair is a free event for parents and their children, with a focus on young children, in celebration of the Week of the Young Child. All are welcome to come out to the Discovery Elementary gym (302 2nd Street, Buffalo) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

There will be a variety of activities for children and their parents provided by the ECCE staff, including a children's book giveaway by BHM School Board members. Highlights include music from the Wonderful World of Woody and magic with Brian Richards. There will also be a silent auction sponsored by the ECCE Parent Advisory Council, and Bison box lunches will be available for purchase.

Summer catalog release

The ECCE summer catalog will be mailed out to families on or about April 10. Offerings include Summer Sun Preschool, ECCE Music in the Park Series, Kinder Camp, and ECCE parent/child classes. Be sure to check out all of the early childhood opportunities offered this summer.

• For more information on all ECCE programs and services, scan this QR Code or visit bhmschools.org/early-childhood-family-education.



*****ECRWSS**
RESIDENT DISTRICT 877



Bison fans show their support during the state quarterfinal game against Lakeville North on March 21. The Bison lost both games at state, but managed to return for the first time since 2014.



SCHOOL BOARD

Melissa Brings..... Chairperson
Bob Sansevere..... Vice Chairperson
Adam Bjorklund..... Clerk
Amanda Lawrence Treasurer
Sue Lee..... Acting Clerk/Treasurer
Sheila Smude..... Director
Matt Hoffman Director
Scott Thielman..... Superintendent
Erica Kyllonen..... Student Representative

Geology

from Page 1

in previous years but was returning in person for the first time since the onset of COVID-19, said it just made sense to share her professional knowledge with a new generation of BCMS students.

"I knew I wanted to be a geologist after taking Earth Science here in eighth grade," she said, adding that she was one of a handful of students who were selected to take a field trip to the Black Hills that year. "That was a life-changing experience for me."

One of the teachers on that trip was Kim Atkins. The two have stayed in touch over the years, with Olinger regularly returning to teach next-level mini units that coincide with the science courses Atkins is teaching at the time.



'I knew I wanted to be a geologist after taking Earth Science here in eighth grade.'

Danielle Olinger

"She's my go-to person when I have questions," said Atkins. "She created this whole lesson for us and is here on her personal time."

The project undertaken by BCMS students tied together much of what they have learned over the course of the year about rock types and the environmental conditions that form them. In the lesson taught by Olinger students learned, among other things, to use field notebooks, compasses and trigonometry to estimate the height of rock outcrops.

Olinger studies rare earth elements in Denver, and

explained that many of the electronics and other items used in everyday life cannot operate without those elements.

"They're in everything we do, every day," Olinger said.

Her educational efforts are not limited to her periodic visits to Buffalo. She has also served as a volunteer education coordinator for the Mines Museum of Earth Science in Colorado, has been involved with community education and outreach for the Geological Society of America, and has conducted various programs at libraries and through the Science Olympiad program.

"There are so many facets of what you can do in this field outside of schools," Olinger said. "I do things like this because I really enjoy it. It helps students know what is out there, and broadens their understanding of what is possible."