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Key Dates

June

- 1.....BHS Arts Showcase, 6 p.m.
- 5....Gr. 6 band concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 6...PRIDE diploma ceremony, 1 p.m.
- 6...Gr. 6 orchestra concert, 7:30 p.m.
- 7....DES Gr. 5 celebration, 1 p.m.
- 8.....Last Day of School
- 9.....Teacher Workshop
- 9.....BHS/PLC graduation, 7 p.m.
- 12...School board wksp., 4:30 p.m.
- 13.....ABE graduation, 7 p.m.
- 26.....School board mtg., 7 p.m.



Discovery and BHS art students enjoyed a team ceramics project in May.



Counting down Urdahl to retire after 60 years of teaching

After teaching for 60 years one might be expected to crawl to the finish line of retirement in exhaustion.

But like a distance runner who hit his stride long ago, Carlton Urdahl barely seems

winded as he breaks the tape marking the end of his career this month.

"It's kind of funny. If I didn't know my age right now, I'd think I'm ready for another year," Urdahl said.

"You just keep on going. I've been very fortunate health-wise, but I guess I have to quit sometime."

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From the Superintendent

State will provide more consistent school funding

Minnesota lawmakers took historic steps toward providing more consistent funding for public schools during the recently completed legislative session, but also enacted a number of insufficiently funded new mandates that will raise challenges going forward.

What do school districts receive in this legislation?

The bill increases the general education funding formula by 4% for the 2023-24 school year, and 2% for 2024-25. In addition, the bill provides an ongoing increase of 2-3% annually based on the rate of inflation. Although this is very good news and it provides the most predictable public school

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Scott Thielman



BHM staff members retiring in 2023 include, front row from left: Barb McIntosh, Lucinda McCoy, Sue Holmberg, Cindy Gilchrist and Jenelle Bryan. Standing in the second row, from left, are Carlton Urdahl, Sarah Krolak, Sharon Herzfeld, Marsha Wolff, Nina Petersen and Brad Robinson. Other retirees not pictured here are shown below.

Retiring Class of 2023 provided over 450 years of service

This year 17 employees from around the district have already or will retire from BHM Schools. Combined, they have provided 456 years of service to the district.

Superintendent Scott Thielman and members of the school board recognized each employee for their dedication to BHM students and the years of service they provided at a retirement luncheon on Friday, May 12.

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 the retirees for their many years of service, and the impact they have made on students, staff and the community.

Jenelle Bryan.....35 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Third-Grade Teacher

Cindy Gilchrist.....32 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Third-Grade Teacher

Laura Hauer.....18 Years
Buffalo High School
English Teacher



Sharon Herzfeld.....24 Years
Parkside Elementary School
Fourth-Grade Teacher



Suzanne Holmberg.....35 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Education Support Professional



Lisa Jude.....26 Years
Parkside Elementary School
Education Support Professional

Nancy Kolasa.....33 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Education Support Professional

Sarah Krolak.....22 Years
Tatanka Elementary STEM School
Educational Support Professional

Lucinda McCoy.....14 Years
BHM Early Childhood Family Education
Educational Support Professional

Barb McIntosh.....23 Years
Buffalo High School
Activities Secretary



Nina Petersen.....23 Years
Parkside Elementary School
Education Support Professional

Mary Piekarski.....28 Years
Buffalo Community Middle School
Education Support Professional

Bradford Robinson.....20 Years
Tatanka Elementary STEM School
Speech Language Pathologist

Diane Smogard-Mastel.....13 Years
BHM Early Childhood Family Education
ECFE teacher

Terri Svec.....32 Years
Buffalo Community Middle School
Band Teacher

Carlton Urdahl.....50 Years
Buffalo High School
Math Teacher

Marsha Wolff.....28 Years
Hanover Elementary School
Educational Support Professional



Meals aid students

The annual 877 Foundation's Pork Chop dinner on April 26 was a success, as more than 700 meals were sold and 1,000 pork chops were distributed, raising about \$5,200 to help provide scholarships for BHS graduates.



BHS students save \$1.5 million

Buffalo High School students earned nearly 5,000 college-level credits, amounting to savings of more than \$1.5 million, during the 2022-23 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 child development.

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

Phone survey planned for early June

District seeking feedback on next project priorities

Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools will partner with Morris Leatherman to conduct a survey of BHM residents from June 1-15.

The purpose of this survey is to determine what projects district residents would support in the next bond referendum to maintain school district facilities. Because a number of existing bonds for past projects are expiring soon, the district is able to plan for a new set of maintenance and security improvements without increasing taxes currently paid by district residents.

During the survey period residents will be contacted by phone. Surveyors will leave a message if the phone is not answered, and residents will have the option to call back at their convenience. The estimated time to take the survey is approximately 10-15 minutes.

Morris Leatherman is a market and research firm that regularly conducts scientific surveys on behalf of its clients, meaning that feedback is taken from an accurate representative sample of the total population.

Breakfast, lunch will be no cost to students in 23-24

Minnesota has become the fourth state to pass a universal school meals bill, titled "Free School Meals for Kids." While the district still needs clarification on some aspects of the law, families can keep the following points in mind:

- Beginning in the 2023-24 school year, every student will be able to receive one free breakfast and one free lunch each school day.

- There is still a cost for

second meals and a-la-carte items like an extra milk or slice of pizza.

- Students will still be required to enter their PIN number in the meal line.

- Families that qualify are encouraged to continue filling out an application for educational benefits each year, as these applications result in more than just support for meals.

More info will be available before next school year.





Danielle Rodenwald



Matthew Scherber

Danielle Rodenwald and Matthew Scherber, who are the 2023 Hall of Fame inductees for BHS. The award recognizes seniors for high academic performance, integrity, leadership, and making a positive impact on their school.



Kaylee Dehmer



Ayden Gawtry

Kaylee Dehmer and Ayden Gawtry, who are the ExCEL Award winners for BHS. The Minnesota State High School League award (Excellence in Community Education and Leadership), is based on excellent academic performance, activity and athletic participation, and active participation in the community.



Buffalo High School seniors Cooper Polzin, Danielle Rodenwald, Ryder Zvorak and Brady Anderson, who were honored at the Students of Excellence awards banquet in St. Cloud on Wednesday. Students were selected based on exemplary academic achievement, leadership skills, or school/community involvement.



Erica Kyllonen, BHS senior who served as the Student Council Representative for the ISD 877 Board of Education for 2022-23.



12 current and former members of the BHM Quest program, who attended the 2023 SCSU math contest and competed against nearly 900 students from 21 schools around Minnesota. The seventh-graders earned fifth place at their grade level, and the eighth-graders earned ninth place. Individual winners (above left) included, from left, MacKenzie Koren (top 10%), Bridgette Sturgeon (top 5%) and Henry Umhoefer (top 10%). Participants (above right) included Nicholas Berg, Braeden Bezek, Trenton Elletson, Tanner Koren, Levi Summers, Ryker Trende, Henry Umhoefer, Kelcie Bode, Nicolas Kuerten, Bridgette Sturgeon, Mackenzie Koren and Olli Niemela.



Members of the BHS Knowledge Bowl team, who took second place in the state Knowledge Bowl competition, and third in the nation. Team members are, from left, Amelia Butler, Matthew Scherber, Milo Zimmerman, Ryder Zvorak and Avery Thompson.



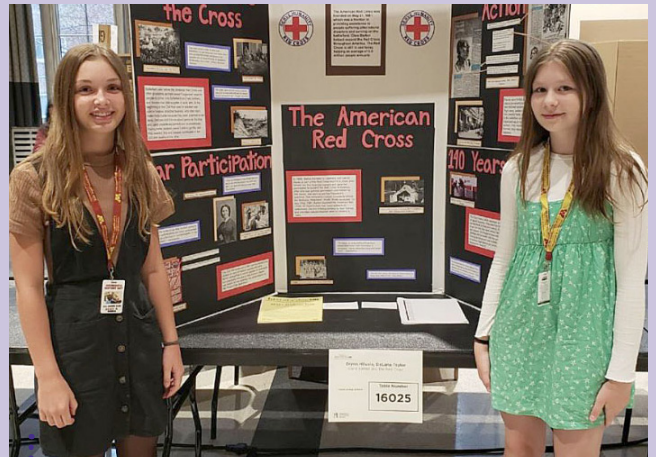
Miriana Eiden, BHS senior who placed first at the State FFA Convention and qualified for the National Convention next October in Prepared Public Speaking.

The following students who took part in and placed at the Future Farmers of America State Convention: **Market Plan (2nd place):** Libbee Mattson, Melia Fischer, Lizi Vance. **Ag Issues (3rd place):** Croix Wirkus, Claire Volden, Shane Sansevere, Callie Quigg, Samantha Thomson, Miles Holtz, Cambelle Feldmen. **Ag Sales (3rd place):** Levi Holtz, Avery Larson, Lily Cooper, Ryan Mayville (3rd individually). **Horse Evaluation (5th place):** Caroline Bobick (8th individually), Shane Sansevere, Kolby Spike, Savannah Laumen. **Employment Skills (9th place):** Faren Bebeau.

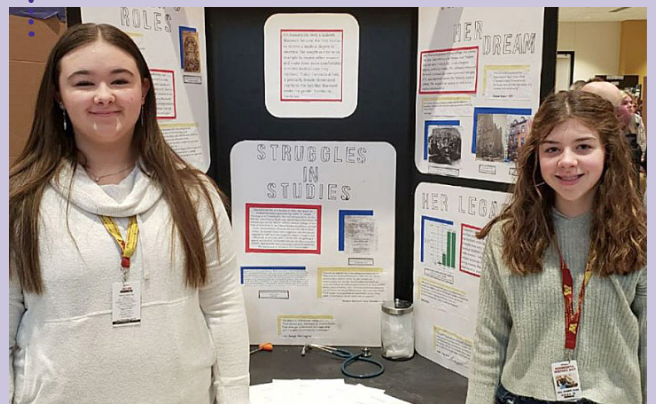
The following students and who qualified for and participated in the FFA State Convention: **Choir and Band:** Croix Wirkus and Levi Holtz. **Creed Speaking:** Kayla Heniz. **Dairy Cattle Evaluation:** Payton Heinz, Adeline Lundahl, Emmet Baker, Sam Bechtold. **Live-stock Evaluation:** Faren Bebeau, Bennet Weese, Bryce Weese, Andrew Schmidt. **Milk Quality:** Leah Halder-son, Kayla Heinz, Brady Heinz, Justin Jendro. **Poultry:** Vivian Grambart, Samantha Thomson, Lauren Knudson, William Gustafson. **Small Animals:** Emily Larson, Sophie Begin-Lopez, Alexis Decker, Jacey Thompson.



Maggie Bertsch, Anna Wuollet and Kiera McGorry, who performed in the MBDA State Honor Band for ninth- and 10th-graders at Fergus Falls High School in April.



Miliya Chenvert, Brynn Hiivala, Syndey Hoffman, Elly Kohls, Juniper Lostetter, and DeLa-na Taylor for representing BCMS at Minnesota History Day's State Competition in April. The pairs of Hiivala and Taylor (above), and Chenvert and Hoffman (below), made it to the final round out of 787 total students and 55 projects in the junior group exhibit category. Both duos earned honorable mention status.



Unified Week

BHS students and staff members braved 35-degree weather, along with flurries and a strong breeze, to participate in the polar plunge event that put an exclamation point on Unified Week at BHS earlier this spring. The week's events raised \$13,000 for the Buffalo Unified program and Special Olympics. Unified programs bring individuals with and without disabilities together to build relationships and grow.



Helppi is new head of buildings and grounds

BHM Schools recently hired Tim Helppi of Buffalo to serve as the district's new director of buildings and grounds.

Helppi will replace outgoing director John Heltunen, who has served the district for the past 10 years, and will start in June.

At present, Helppi is the vice president of operations for Grindstone Construction Services in Buffalo. He previously worked as a carpenter and foreman for JSH Construction in Howard Lake and RTL Construction in Shakopee.

The BHM hiring commit-



Tim Helppi

tee was drawn to Helppi's experience in project and personnel management, track record of positive and collaborative relationship-building, and openness to input and feedback.

Pomp and Circumstance

BHM programs planning June graduation ceremonies

BHS and Phoenix Learning Center

Friday, June 9 | 7 p.m.
Bison Field West

Buffalo High School (BHS) will have close to 470 graduates, with 16 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 6 | 1 p.m.
Discovery Center Auditorium

Seven PRIDE Transition students will go through a Diploma Ceremony signifying that they have met and completed the program requirements. PRIDE allows 18-21 year-old students 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 13 | 7 p.m.
Discovery Center Auditorium

At least 27 adults will be recognized for having earned their GED diploma during the West Adult Basic Education (ABE) graduation ceremony in Buffalo (including a half dozen graduates who attended Buffalo ABE). Other individuals will also be recognized during an awards presentation for other achievements earned, including the attainment of U.S. citizenship. The public is invited to attend the ceremony and reception following the event.

Thielman

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funding in history, I would be remiss if I didn't let our community know that the rate of inflation has outpaced increases in funding for the past two decades. The rate of inflation in 2022 was 8%, and the current rate of inflation is 5.8%, according to the Minneapolis Federal Reserve.

I only reference this information because of how legislators tout their investment in education, and yet they rarely acknowledge the fact that they have historically underfunded schools.

For example, the new funding does not eliminate the longstanding special education deficit, as the rhetoric about "fully funding" schools would require. Instead, the new education funding covers 44% of special education costs. For BHM Schools, that means the state will cover approximately \$525 of the \$1,200 per-pupil special education deficit, leaving the district to continue covering the remaining \$675 with the general education funding it receives.

There are a few other provisions that will provide some additional funding for English language learners and a portion of a support position. All of this will help school districts, because state and

federal government pandemic one-time funding expires in June of 2024.

BHM School District will continue to focus on class sizes as we experience a reduction in student enrollment, and we will utilize school funding to maintain appropriate class sizes in the future.

New issues to navigate as a result of the legislative session include unemployment for hourly workers, new student testing and e-learning requirements, removal of the district's managerial right to determine staffing

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Urdahl

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Urdahl grew up in Litchfield and double-majored in German and math at Concordia College in Moorhead, then taught in Granite Falls for 10 years before joining Buffalo-Hanover-Montrose Schools as a junior high math and German teacher in 1973. Three years into his new role he became a math teacher exclusively, and after a decade in junior high he moved to the high school, where he has remained for the past 40 years.

Buffalo High School Principal Mark Mischke said Urdahl is "one of the kindest people I have ever met," and an "eternal optimist" in regard to student potential.

'BHS will probably never see another Carlton Urdahl.'

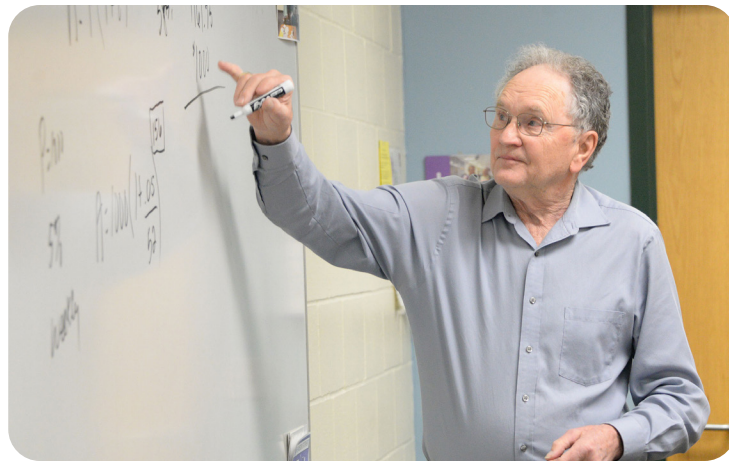
Mark Mischke

"He believes every child has the capabilities to succeed in not only math, but life. They simply need support to get them there," Mischke said.

As evidence of Urdahl's effectiveness, Mischke pointed out that he teaches one of the most challenging courses at BHS in Calculus, and that over 81% of Urdahl's nearly 800 students to take the AP Calculus exam have performed well enough to earn college credit.

Urdahl explained that he particularly enjoys teaching the advanced math classes where students expand the limits of their intellectual boundaries.

"I love teaching calculus. It's my biggest thrill," he said. "It's a challenge and there's something about



it that kind of gets to me – I think I can get them to understand it."

The results support that belief, but Urdahl's impact goes well beyond statistics.

"He has been a mentor to me during my 15 years here at BHS, and quite honestly, BHS will probably never see another Carlton Urdahl," Mischke said. "I think the quote is, 'Don't be sad it's over; be thankful it happened.' I'm thankful that BHS has had the honor to have had Carlton Urdahl serve our students, staff and community over the last 50 years."

Always growing

Urdahl decided he wanted to become a teacher in fourth grade, the point when he realized that the occupation was open to men as well as women. He remembered working through math flash cards in the hallway of his 23-student country school, and coming to the realization that numbers could be the focus of his life's work.

Later, while attending a math conference as a teacher, Urdahl recalled another formative moment.

"The instructor said, 'If you were teaching literature you'd be reading a lot of books because you teach literature and you like literature,'" Urdahl remembered. "Then he said, 'You people are math

teachers; you should be doing a lot of math.'"

Urdahl took the challenge to heart, and has made a tradition of working through calculus problems over breakfast each day.

"I just think you have to enjoy your topic," he said.

His fellow teachers have recognized that enjoyment in Urdahl, and have appreciated his leadership.

"He loves teaching and is a life-long learner," said BHS math teacher Joel Peterson. "You will find a variety of calculus books piled up in the back seat of his car, and he works on his 800 calc

'I've really loved teaching at Buffalo. There's no other place I really wanted to go.'

Carlton Urdahl

problem book at Perkins most mornings. He is always challenging himself while finding new examples to bring into the classroom. He cares deeply about the math department and has been a valuable mentor to many of us in this school. He will be missed."

Highlights

Over his 50 years in Buffalo, Urdahl said one of

the biggest highlights was the mid-year move to the new high school in 1996-97. Aside from that, students came first.

"This sounds kind of hokey, but the kids are the highlights," he said. "You get a kid that just really gets excited about something, and to me that is fun to watch."

As for changes over a half century of teaching, Urdahl said technology use by staff and students is the main difference, but the essentials have remained the same.

"I still have trouble with the computer," he said with a laugh.

Cattle and commute

Aside from college, Granite Falls and 13 years living in Buffalo, Urdahl has resided on the same family cattle farm where he was born and grew up. He purchased the buildings and 50 acres in 1986 and continued to operate the farm, along with other family members, while teaching. At one point he owned 120 head of cattle and woke up around 3:30 every morning to do chores and help his brother before his 45-mile drive to school.

And he still had the energy for a full day of teaching?

"Oh, it just keeps you going," he said of his extra work. "That was my life."

Despite the distance, Urdahl said he never considered other options closer to home.

"I've never even looked at different openings. I just liked it here," he said. "Driving from Litchfield to Buffalo, it's about 45 miles, but it's an easy 45. I've really loved teaching at Buffalo. There's no other place I really wanted to go."

** The full text of this abridged article is available at <https://bit.ly/Urdahl23>.*



The BHS spring play, 'Twelfth Night,' provided more than 30 cast and crew members, along with their audiences, an opportunity to enjoy a Shakespeare comedy earlier this spring.



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

Thielman

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without negotiating adult-to-student ratios in classrooms and student-to-personnel ratios, etc.

In summary, the new funding is very welcome and appreciated, and the new mandates that are not funded will have to be addressed in the upcoming legislative sessions.

Facility maintenance

Good stewardship of the facilities provided by our communities is a responsibility that we take very seriously, as any passers-by or visitors to our schools can see. Even with the new funding provided by the state, we cannot keep up with ongoing maintenance needs without asking for the continued assistance of our communities.

In this case, however, ongoing support does not involve a tax increase. Rather, we are looking to continue the current level of investment needed to maintain and improve the physical integrity and safety of our buildings. In terms of safety for students and staff,

the district is exploring the possibility of creating more secure entrances at Buffalo Community Middle School and Buffalo High School. We continue to see this need as our country endures increased violence at schools.

Measured, sustained attention to both safety and maintenance will ensure that generations of students to come benefit from learning environments that meet state and federal standards, as well as our communities' expectations.

In this case, ongoing support does not involve a tax increase.

With that in mind, the district will conduct a survey after the Memorial Day holiday to gather feedback about the scope of the facility improvements. Again, it is the district's intent to make the improvements **without** increasing property taxes.

Looking back, it is clear that the BHM School District has a history of using the investments of its communities to maximize the use and versatility of its facilities, and we want to maintain that tradition moving forward. It is hard

to believe that it has been about 10 years since the last major investment in our school facilities was made. Those investments enabled BHM to create safer entrances to three elementary schools, add some classrooms to schools, replace the original roof at the high school, improve the exterior of all of the schools through tuckpointing, enhance our technology infrastructure, improve activities facilities and replace some outdated computers and servers.

Closing the school year

As the school year comes to a close, students are being recognized for their achievements. We are extremely proud of the opportunities and options we provide our students to meet their educational needs. BHM teachers and staff are second to none in the commitment they have to our students, and their number one priority is the success of every student.

We remain grateful for the opportunity to serve our students, parents and communities. BHM Schools is committed to making a difference in the lives of our students, and ensuring that it continues to be the place where they can **"dream, believe and achieve"** their goals!