



ONE SCHOOL ONE FAMILY



BEATRICE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Striving to be the Best in the Nation

WELCOME!



As we begin to wrap up the 2020-21 school year and put the finishing touches on the Annual Report, I write this letter from two perspectives: one of reflection on what we've achieved, and one of looking toward progress for the future. I have said many times that our district's greatest strengths lie in our diversity and in our ability to come together to provide our students ever greater opportunities. We all wish to give our children more than we had—more experiences, more knowledge, more chances to achieve their greatest potential—and I truly feel that everything we've achieved over this last year has been a testament to those goals.

In these pages, you will find a consistent thread of excellence running through Beatrice Public Schools. And no matter which side you're looking from, that thread very likely leads back to you. It comes from the support of the thousands of parents and patrons who bolster our students' efforts, and it comes from the caring staff who create inspirational opportunities for students to experience success in their academics and activities. It also comes from our Board serving to always support our efforts, and from the students themselves putting the work and love into their own futures. We are all a community at work together toward a common goal of support for the needs of these children, and I couldn't ask for better teammates in the endeavor.

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES

The 2019-20 school year was certainly one for the record books. The impact of the pandemic and the myriad challenges from it stretched us to limits that none of us thought to experience—or hope to ever experience again. From teaching and learning remotely, to adaptations in the classrooms, we are all no doubt excited to move forward and put the memories of the pandemic behind us. But through it all over the last 12 months, we have still served students at a high engagement rate, no matter the method, and crucially met their nutritional needs at a time when doing so was more challenging than ever before.

EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS

Two years ago, we set a writing goal to improve ACT English Language Arts scores. In 2019, that goal was accomplished improving from 41% meeting expectations to 52% meeting expectations. We are fortunate to have concrete, quantifiable evidence of our success in this regard, and I look forward to continued progress as we continue these strategies.

FOUNDATIONAL GUIDANCE

Our constant commitment to Early Childhood Education and serving our youngest learners has

shown brightly once again this year as we worked with our preschool partner YMCA. When they decided to move out of the education realm, we were there to help ease the process by providing high quality instruction to newly enrolled students, ensuring none would be left out of receiving these essential early years of foundational guidance.

FUTURE FOCUS

The financial priorities of the district remain focused on maintaining a high quality, veteran teaching and support staff above all else, and I'm confident none would argue against having the best and brightest mentors for our children. But this does leave little budgetary room for advancing the facilities in which they all teach and learn. And many of those facilities are in desperate need of significant attention. Furthermore, there are certain opportunities that are currently difficult or impossible to provide in many of our buildings, and there are certain inevitabilities in the functional lifespan of several of those structures that we will very soon have no choice but to face.

Currently, the district operates inefficiently with the number of buildings and duplicated resources throughout the schools. With a preschool and three elementary buildings spread out around the community, we pay significant costs in many areas that could be streamlined with more

modern facilities. With the ability to pursue a new preschool/elementary/middle school campus, we could offer state-of-the-art rooms and learning layouts while improving efficiencies in utilities, transportation, upkeep, and many other areas. Additionally, our youngest learners would be together longer, they could grow an appreciation for differences earlier, they would benefit from access to students of wider age ranges to foster mentorships and relationships they may carry for life, and the community could grow together as a result. Beatrice has realized innumerable benefits from the new high school facilities over the years since its construction, and a new elementary/middle school facility could grant similar advantages. As it stands, with four buildings in the district that are 61 years old, we are simply counting the days until they can no longer be repaired safely.

I have never been more exhilarated by the challenges ahead. Each one presents great opportunities for discussion, but also great possibilities. Together we are placing all of our students on a trajectory toward graduation and excellence beyond, and I hope each one of you knows you own a stake in that success. The Beatrice community rightfully continues to set the bar high for us, which makes it all the more rewarding to be able to list the accomplishments

in this report. Our students and staff have weathered the temporary storm of the pandemic with a strength and resilience that will continue to serve them well no matter the challenges ahead, and now as we embark on the next chapter of education in our community, I feel it is imperative we remember the depth of our duty to serve them. Someone somewhere stepped up for each one of us as youth. Now, as we all move together to develop an even greater vision for the next generation of Orangeman and Lady O, we have an opportunity to step up in turn and together help propel them to a truly bright future.

THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN BEATRICE PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

Sincerely,



JASON ALEXANDER
SUPERINTENDENT

PRESCHOOL

PRESCHOOL PROGRAM REACHING 90% OF INCOMING KINDERGARTNERS

Beatrice Community Preschool has grown by leaps and bounds over the past eight years from about 40 students to more than 220. In December 2020, the YMCA closed its preschool, and BPS transitioned those students to the district's program. About 90% of students now enter kindergarten with a quality preschool experience.

“As more students attend preschool, they are able to enter kindergarten with pre-academic skills learned, giving them the ability to focus on academics,” said preschool teacher Sarah Bartlett.

The hands-on, play-based program emphasizes the growth of each child. Visitors to the preschool will see students and staff playing in teacher-

led and open activities. Adults in the classroom change out materials to reflect the students' interests and themed learning.

The preschool focuses on the social-emotional growth of 3- and 4-year-olds, helping them learn about their feelings and ways to accept, change or deal with situations. Weekly learning targets for literacy, math and social-emotional learning are carried out through play and large- and small-group instruction.

With its wide range of students, the preschool serves all children inclusively. Twenty-six percent receive special education services while 83% receive free or reduced-price meals. To enhance the connection between home and school, the preschool schedules two home visits, two parent-teacher conferences and at least four family events each year.



UNITY



‘ONE SCHOOL, ONE FAMILY’ MAKES DISTRICT STRONGER

With students spread across seven buildings, Beatrice Public Schools has adopted the motto “One School, One Family” to emphasize the importance of relationships in promoting student success. Like a family, students, faculty and staff embrace their individual differences while supporting each other.

The inspiration for the motto came at the funeral for a former student who lost his life in an automobile accident. Although he wasn’t an athlete on the field, his dedication to the football team as student manager was unsurpassed. His pallbearers were a diverse group bound together by their mutual affection for their friend.

BPS has extended the “One School, One Family” motto from the high school throughout the district and challenged all staff to focus on

building a partnership of learners to move the district forward.

“A family is made up of individuals with a common bond. Although our students and staff are all individuals, we share a common bond through our dedication to Beatrice Public Schools,” said Erin Hamilton, high school math teacher.”

Other efforts to promote learning partnerships include the “house philosophy” at the middle school and all three elementary schools. Students are organized into houses, giving them a sense of belonging and creating opportunities for older students to mentor younger ones.

EXPLORATION

SUMMER EXPLORATION PROGRAM KEEPS KIDS ENGAGED

Best Possible Summer keeps elementary students' minds engaged with hands-on learning through fun activities. They build reading, math and science skills through exploration and experience.

It's just one elementary program that's seen explosive growth over the past few years. Beginning with 180 students, Best Possible Summer more than doubled to nearly 400 students by 2019. Once kids attend, they inevitably want to return and tell their friends, adding to the program's success.

Students begin their day at Paddock Lane Elementary by grabbing their breakfast and hurrying to their classrooms. The hum of active learning fills the school as students participate in cooking and baking, writing and acting out plays, designing and constructing buildings, connecting

circuits and building robots. They build solar ovens to make s'mores and solve problems with clues in the Escape Room.

Healthy eating classes offered by the Extension Office have opened the eyes of not only students but also their parents, resulting in healthier choices at home. Kids learn proper pet care by actually caring for animals at the Humane Society, and making lotions, bath salts and soap is always popular.

"The Best Possible Summer school provides students with opportunities to connect to the academic standards through a hands-on, engaging experience to help extend the learning from the year," said Dr. Jackie Nielsen, assistant superintendent.



INTENSITY



COORDINATED EFFORT IMPROVES WRITING SCORES

Last year's school improvement goal was for 60% of juniors to score a 7 or above on the ACT writing test. High school faculty responded to the challenge with a four-pronged approach that increased scores on practice writing tests by nearly 20%.

First, they familiarized students with what ACT graders would look for in a student's paper. Second, to build background knowledge, writing was increased in all subjects, and the English department increased the amount of nonfiction text students read. Third, each junior took at least four ACT practice exams. Fourth, students received targeted feedback with every test.

The initial cold test score average was 5.35. By the end of the last practice exam, the average had improved to 6.38. While still below the target

score of 7, the average on the final practice test showed real growth from the students.

Although the target area was the ACT writing portion, all high school departments worked together to boost student performance. Students improved their ability to find and respond to the main ideas of an argument and received more practice in defending their beliefs in writing.

"The pursuit of this school improvement goal truly felt like a team effort," said English teacher Megan Robeson. "It encouraged staff, as well as students, to work collaboratively, move outside our comfort zones and critically consider the role writing plays in our school."

HANDS-ON

BEAM PROVIDES VALUABLE CAREER-READINESS SKILLS

BEAM (Beatrice Educational and Activities Media) represents a key component of the emerging high school model focused on college and career readiness. Students work with community partners to gain hands-on education while exploring career interests.

Students participating in BEAM work with broadcasting professionals to livestream events and learn media production skills. Students provide color commentary with Bryan Cook, who was a broadcaster at KWBE for years, as well as learning from longtime color commentator Jeff Junker.

Students develop cutting-edge technology skills using Adobe Photoshop and Premiere Pro to create content for the Daktronics Video Board and the NewTek TriCaster. Students learn to

incorporate multiple camera angles and instant replay with manual and PTZ cameras.

Partnering with professionals in our community to develop future career opportunities for our students provides invaluable experience for students who are interested in pursuing careers in media production and broadcasting.

“Learning firsthand from commenting veterans allows me to be more comfortable with what I am going to say,” said student Tucker Timmerman. “It is very nerve-racking at first, but when you are on air with two broadcasting veterans like Jeff and Bryan, it’s a piece of cake.”



STRATEGY



NEXT STRATEGIC PLAN TO SET CRUCIAL DIRECTION FOR BPS

Beatrice Public Schools' current five-year strategic plan is wrapping up, and the district now turns its attention to the next five years. That process will decide direction on issues such as college and career readiness, student experiences from preschool to graduation, busing, staffing and the ideal arrangement of facilities.

“The strategic plan is our road map, our guiding force to keep moving the district forward,” said Superintendent Jason Alexander.”

During the past five years, BPS has seen progress toward becoming one of the best school districts in the nation. The current five-year plan has addressed:

- Creating compelling learning experiences that promote individual goals and interests.

Through curriculum such as Habitudes, students focus on leadership skills, resiliency and critical thinking. The district provides exposure to businesses and industries, including job shadowing, as well as college exploration.

- Exemplifying a culture of character. Implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) ensures a common language among staff with clear expectations. The house system at the middle and elementary schools focuses on student collaboration and high expectations.
- Mutual engagement throughout the community. BPS not only communicates with its stakeholders through multiple platforms but also involves students in events such as the Community Pep Rally. The BLAST after-school program brings in community partners on Working Wednesdays.



BY THE NUMBERS

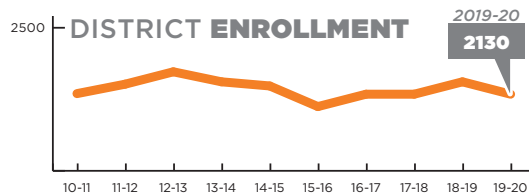
STUDENT DATA

54%
PERCENT **FREE/REDUCED LUNCHES**

24%
PERCENT **SPED**

1%
PERCENT **EL**

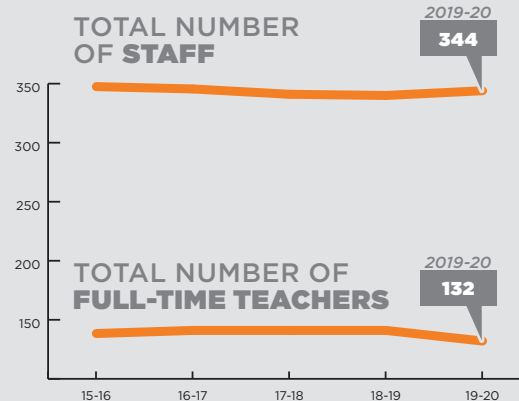
13%
PERCENT **HAL (GIFTED)**



STAFF DATA

58.3%
PERCENT OF **FULL-TIME TEACHERS W/ MASTERS DEGREE**

16.6
AVERAGE YEARS **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**



FINANCIAL DATA

LOCAL RECEIPTS
FROM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

19-20 \$12,957,405

\$12,888,120

STATE RECEIPTS
FROM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

19-20 \$8,302,495

\$9,602,955

TOTAL RECEIPTS
FROM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

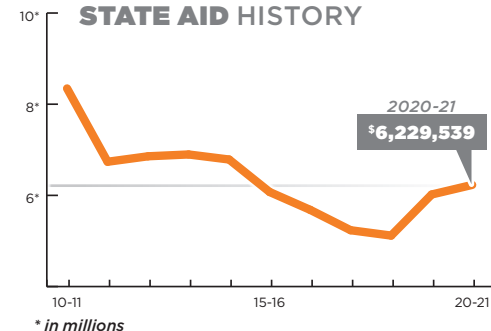
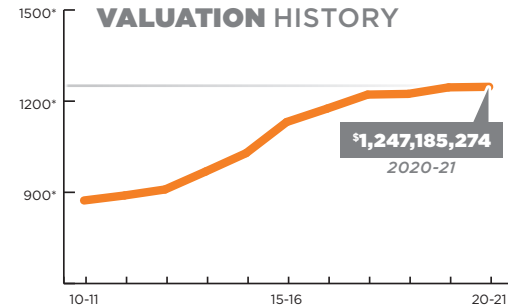
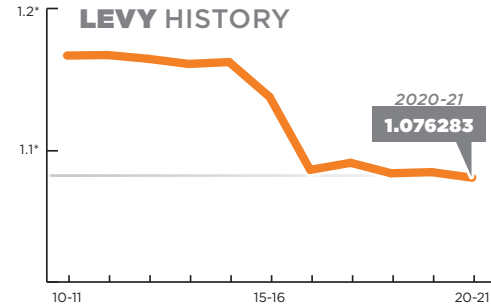
19-20 \$22,641,951

\$24,085,402

TOTAL EXPENDITURES
FROM ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

19-20 \$23,099,097

\$23,958,925



* in millions



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PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Striving to be the Best in the Nation

320 North 5th Street
Beatrice, NE 68310

FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION:

“The future is bright for Beatrice Public Schools. That future involves not only providing every student the opportunity to be college ready, but also ensuring every graduate of Beatrice High School is prepared for a career. We are excited to bring more advanced career education and exploration to our students. Whether in a factory or a hospital, a classroom or a boardroom, BPS students will excel.”

— Jon Zimmerman

BOARD MEMBERS

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