



Viking Voice

Bronson Community Schools Newsletter • 2024 Volume 10, Issue 1

So much to celebrate!

As we look forward to a very active spring season, we have much to celebrate!

First and foremost, in early November, we celebrated the **renewal of our sinking fund millage**. Thank you to our amazing community for supporting this renewal and providing the funding necessary to address facility and technology needs in our district. This year, we have completed a flooring project at Bronson Jr/Sr High School and plumbing projects at Ryan Elementary and the Jr/Sr High. This summer we will be using sinking funds to offset the unreimbursable costs of a wiring upgrade project at Anderson and the Jr/Sr High. We also will use sinking funds to increase ventilation in the Anderson and Jr/Sr High School kitchens. In addition, we will completely remodel the Ryan Elementary student bathrooms this summer with these funds - something that is much needed. Our K-12 classrooms will be receiving interactive touch panel screens for teachers and students to utilize for more interactive and engaging learning experiences. This will be an upgrade for our learning spaces as many of them at Ryan and the Jr/Sr High School still have chalkboards. These will be funded with federal Title funds for elementary classrooms and sinking fund dollars for our 6-12 grade classrooms.



The following BHS students made the President's Honor Roll at Glen Oaks Community College for the Fall 2023 Semester. These students achieved a GPA of 4.0: Itzel Albarran, Boston Bucklin, Vanessa Carrillo, Isabella Cranson, Hailey Francom, Ashlynn Harris, Brealyn Lasky, and Cheyanne Villasan. Additionally, the following students achieved a GPA of 3.75-3.99, placing them on the Dean's Honor Roll for the Fall 2023 Semester: Ava Hathaway, Kimberly Jewett, Valentina Medina, Kailynne Scare, Lillian Sutton, Savanna Taylor, Mya Webb, and Miranda Wolford.

We also have a **regional elementary spelling bee champion** at Ryan Elementary, fourth grader, Emmy Stanton.

In January, we inducted five new members into the **Bronson Community Schools Hall of Fame**. Inductees were honored for their participation and impact on school-related activities, contribution to community, and/or contribution to schools. Congratulations to Myra Belote, Olan Martin, Jim Modert, Lindsey Rees, and Warren Wade.

We also **celebrated our thespians** who put on two plays this winter: "A Christmas Carol" and "A Charlie Brown Christmas" along with a spring musical: "You're a Good Man Charlie Brown!"

Our athletic teams continue to have successful seasons bringing home various district and regional championships and participation in state-level matches. We also had a student sing the national anthem at various state-level tournament events!

Our celebrations span throughout various groups of students, community members, and buildings. We cannot wait to celebrate even more throughout the end of the 2023-2024 school year!

Kate Wall, Superintendent
#GDTBABV (Great Day to Be a Bronson Viking)

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Numbers to know

Anderson Elementary
517.369.3234

Ryan Elementary
517.369.3254

Bronson Jr/Sr High
517.369.3230

Administration
517.369.3260

Follow Along!

You can find all of our buildings on Facebook, and Bronson Community Schools on both Facebook and Instagram



You spoke - we listened. An update on Teacher Professional Development, Collaboration, and PLCs

For the last few years, Bronson Community Schools has had delayed start Fridays to provide teachers with more time for meeting in professional learning communities and participating in staff development. Delayed start Fridays give teachers approximately 50 minutes, while only delaying bus routes and drop-off schedules for families by 15 minutes. We know that this time is very valuable for our staff, but comes with its own set of challenges. One of the biggest challenges is adequate supervision for students in all buildings. Not having enough staff to supervise our students who come to school when staff are in meetings is a safety concern. There also have been many times that great discussions and learning are taking place, but have to come to an abrupt halt because of the start of the school day. These challenges have prompted us to start looking at a different way to provide teachers with this valuable time at the end of the school day or on half days throughout the year.

Earlier this school year, we sent out a survey to see how students, families, and staff felt about delayed start and what they might like to see instead. Overwhelmingly, across all groups, delayed start Fridays are not preferred. A half-day or early release seemed to receive more positive responses. The administration and teachers are discussing options and hope to have a final decision made and a calendar for the 2024-2025 school year finalized and approved by the Board of Education, soon.

In addition to the responses about what structure (delayed start, early release, or half days) we asked for additional ideas and provided a space for those who provided input to tell us more about their responses. We appreciate the time you took to provide this feedback and would like to provide some additional details and information about what we heard. To the right, you'll find a list of common questions and answers. Should you have additional questions, please don't hesitate to contact Superintendent Wall directly.

We know that any change to the regular school day puts a burden on families to make alternate arrangements for their children. We also know that providing time for teacher professional development is critical for student success and appreciate your flexibility and understanding as we balance and accommodate the complex needs of our students and staff.



Mark your calendars!

State-testing season is upon us! Please see the testing dates/windows, below for students in grades 3-11:

Wednesday, April 10th - PSAT and SAT, MSTEP: Grades 6 and 7 *NO SCHOOL FOR SENIORS*

Thursday, April 11th - MSTEP: Grades 6-8 and Workkeys

Tuesday, April 16th - MSTEP: Grade 11

Wednesday, April 17th - MSTEP: Grades 8 & 11

MSTEP Testing Windows for Ryan Elementary (specific testing schedules will be set and communicated via Seesaw and other school communication tools): April 8th - May 17th



Frequently asked questions

Didn't this start because of COVID when virtual learning was going on and teachers needed time to reach out to families during their day? Why do we still need it?

The year we had virtual instruction offered after COVID, we had half days every Friday. This time did allow for teachers to plan and check in with virtual students, as two-way contacts were a requirement of virtual learning. Teachers do not need time for this any longer. What they do need, however, is time to meet with their grade level and/or subject area colleagues and engage in job-embedded professional development to grow in their craft and support the ever-growing needs of our students throughout the year.

Using part of the school day takes away time from student instruction - why can't this happen outside of the course of the normal school day?

This is accurate. Scheduling this time during our instructional day does take away from student learning time. However, giving teachers this time during the instructional day does not impact what is required by the State of Michigan. We are required to be in session for 180 days and 1,098 minutes over the course of the year. Even with a delayed start, an early release, or a half day structure, we are still over these minimums in all buildings.

How are staff held accountable for this time?

Administrators have agendas created for each day and staff are required to sign in every time these opportunities are offered. Staff are awarded continuing education credits and are required to submit a reflection to earn those credits. The State also approves our plan for these days and also holds the district accountable in this way.

Can this time happen during breaks or during the summer? Aren't teachers contracted for the whole year?

Teachers are not contracted for the entire year. Teachers are contracted for 185 days (180 student days and 5 professional development days). If we offered these during breaks, we could not mandate the days, and would have to pay staff a stipend for their time.

Research shows that professional development is most effective when it is ongoing, sustained, and job-embedded. Offering professional development during breaks does not support this evidence.

Can we have more full days without instruction during the year for this purpose?

We absolutely could. But remember, the state requires that we have 180 days of instruction. Additional student days off in the year would require us to go more days into the summer.

Other districts around us do not do this - why does Bronson?

Coldwater Community Schools has successfully utilized early release for many years, and Colon Community Schools incorporated early release days this school year.



We know these testing days can be stressful for your student. Here are some tips on how to help your student:

- **Have a positive attitude.** The more positive you are about these days, the better your student will feel about them.
- Make sure your student has **a good breakfast** on test days. A healthy breakfast feeds the brain as well!
- Help your student get **a good night's sleep** the night before test days.
- Finally, **talk to your student about these tests.** While they are important, they don't measure things like attitude, creative ability and the many gifts your child has as an individual.

Milliman Trust Update

Scholarship Account

At their February meeting, the Board of Education approved the establishment of the Diana K Milliman Trust Endowed Scholarship Fund. The fund will be established with the Branch County Community Foundation with \$50,000 of the funds received from the trust.

This scholarship will benefit Bronson graduates for years to come. Be on the lookout in future years for scholarship award recipients!

Classroom Furniture

A committee of staff have worked together to select desk, table, and chair options for the district to purchase. Teachers will identify their preferences for their classroom, and we will work through the purchasing process to get the furniture in classrooms/in district this summer. Furniture is being purchased with the remainder of the Milliman Trust Donation.

We'll be sure to share the progress of this project with the community as plans become more finalized.



Current furniture (framed in yellow). It can be difficult to learn when you cannot fit all the necessary materials on the surface of the desk. Our current student furniture also does not easily allow for student collaboration/engaging learning opportunities.

Proposed furniture (framed in purple). We'll update all student furniture district-wide, which will positively impact EVERY student who attends Bronson Community Schools.(Note, the desk shown with wheels is for representation. The proposed desk will not have wheels.)



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