



## ***Bethalto Community Unit School District #8***

610 Texas Boulevard - Bethalto, Illinois 62010

Phone: (618) 377-7200 Fax: (618) 377-2845

[www.bethalto.org](http://www.bethalto.org)

**Dr. Jill Griffin, Superintendent of Schools**

**Mr. Justin Newell**

*Curriculum Director*

**Mrs. Jennifer Weber**

*Pupil Personnel Services*

*Coordinator*

**Dr. Barrett Deist**

*Business Manager (CSBO)*

2-15-18

Dear Bethalto Unit 8 Families and Community,

Happy Valentine's Week! I hope 2018 is off to a fantastic start for your family. We are officially half-way through the third quarter, which is hard to imagine. There is a lot to report out 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter, so I apologize in advance for the length of this newsletter.

### **FINANCIAL UPDATE**

As you may well remember, we were extremely concerned at the start of the school year that we would be put in a position by the state of having to close our doors within a month of opening them. At that time, we were not receiving any General State Aid payments from the state, funding that equates to about \$9,750,000 for our school district. After one month of receiving no funding, the legislature and governor got their act together, on this issue, and finally began sending payments to our school district. Surprisingly, they not only started sending the current payments, but sent the payments that they had missed as well. To date, the state continues to send our General State Aid payments on schedule, having received \$5,750,000 so far this school year.

This being said, the state continues to fail in its commitment to send the new tiered funding that it promised this year, and the governor touted in political television ads. This tiered funding was estimated to be about \$700,000. So far, we have received \$0.00. The legislature and governor continue to play politics with this promised funding, instead of addressing some basic issues that simply need to be resolved. Most recently, we were told that the funding would be vouchered in April. However, a voucher simply means that the state will issue our district an "I owe you". The state vouchers money all the time and we often wait months to, in some cases, more than half a year before the funds actually arrive at our district. We budgeted this increase in revenue and need it to arrive to ensure a balanced budget.

The state also continues to fail in its commitment to send its mandated categorical payments to our school district. These payments include additional funding for special education students, bus transportation, early childhood education, etc. To date it has sent \$0.00 of its \$70,000 additional obligation to support our special education programs, \$0.00 of its \$830,000 obligation to help bus our students to and from school, and only \$45,000 of its \$180,000 obligation to support our early childhood program. These three total \$1,080,000, of which we have received \$45,000, only 4.2%. We budgeted these payments and need them to arrive to ensure a balanced budget.

***"Achievement for All"***

These failures rest on top of years of proration of payments where the state knew it owed our district additional funding, but sent only what it chose to send. For example, over the past several years, the state has failed to send our district about \$4,500,000 in General State Aid payments and \$1,200,000 in transportation reimbursement due to proration.

Our district is facing the same issue this year that we faced last year, as the state fails to send its obligated funding to our school district, we face the prospect of having to borrow money short term to ensure we can pay the bills. The school board recently authorized seeking a \$2,000,000 line of credit, short term borrowing, to temporarily cover for the state's failure. This means that you, our local taxpayers, will have to temporarily cover what should be solely an obligation of the state. We need the governor and legislature to get their acts together and do their constitutional duty, properly fund our school district.

### **ENROLLMENT**

At the turn of the semester our enrollment was 2,471, which is a slight increase from the beginning of the school year. We have an additional 16 students second semester.

### **CELL PHONE USAGE AND ITS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF OUR TEENAGERS**

One of our administrators came across this article in Psychology Today and shared it with our administrative team. You may have already read it, but I felt it has some important information in it that might be useful for you as parents of children with cell phones. It specifically speaks to the mental health of teenagers and some of the data they are finding correlating it to cell phone usage. It describes data and the methodology of a few studies to try and rule out what has changed among teenagers in the last decade that might relate to the increased depression, suicide, and attempted suicide. As a mother of a middle school student, I found the article to be enlightening.

[http://theconversation.com/with-teen-mental-health-deteriorating-over-five-years-theres-a-likely-culprit-86996?utm\\_source=pocket&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=pockethits](http://theconversation.com/with-teen-mental-health-deteriorating-over-five-years-theres-a-likely-culprit-86996?utm_source=pocket&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pockethits)

### **KINDERGARTEN ROUND-UP**

Kindergarten registration for the 2018-19 school year is now taking place. Registration begins Thursday, February 15th from 4-7:30 p.m., Friday, February 16th from 8:30-3:00 p.m. and Friday, March 9th from 12:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m. You can schedule your appointment for registration by visiting <http://bethaltoeast.bethalto.org/kindergarten-registration.html> If time slots are full, please contact the Bethalto East Office to schedule a time during those hours that are convenient for you. After these dates, Kindergarten registration will occur daily from 8:30am to 2:30pm beginning Monday, February 19, 2018 - Friday, April 20, 2018 at the Bethalto East Office. We will have a Kindergarten Orientation prior to the start of the 18-19 school year to give you and your child an opportunity to tour Bethalto East, meet your student's teacher, ride the bus, and learn about important policies and procedures.



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### **COMMUNITY NIGHT**

Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Community Night, Only One You, will be held on Thursday, March 8. Dinner is provided and begins at 5:30 p.m. All activities will start at 6:00p.m. There will be many educational sessions and activities for families including a story teller, making slime, and touring an emergency medical helicopter! Families will also have the chance to participate in community service projects such as helping to paint little libraries to put up in our community and painting rocks to beautify our school grounds. Come meet and greet some of our very own CM and Trimpe athletes! You can also enjoy a special preview of the Spring Musical. In addition, there will be many informational booths set up to learn more about what our community has to offer. Transportation will be provided by all who need it, please contact ---- to arrange for transportation. The evening is paid for by Title I funds, meeting the parent involvement requirement for Steven's Law.

### **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Unfortunately, it is that time of year where it seems we are constantly watching the weather forecast and determining if we can hold school. These are difficult decisions that we do not take lightly. We recognize the hardship it creates for families of our younger students when we do call off school for childcare purposes while keeping in mind we cannot have students waiting at bus stops too long in frigid temperatures. In addition, the rural areas of our district can provide hazardous road conditions for our buses to transport students, so those are considerations as well. Please know that this is a decision that we rarely please everyone, nor is that our goal, our priority is and will remain the safety and welfare of our students and often will air on the side of caution when making these decisions.

### **DATES TO REMEMBER**

February 15<sup>th</sup> -Early dismissal for parent teacher conferences (4:00-8:00 p.m.)

February 16<sup>th</sup> - Teacher's Institute -NO SCHOOL

February 19<sup>th</sup> -President's Day-NO SCHOOL

March 9<sup>th</sup> - SIP day and early dismissal

March 28<sup>th</sup> -April 3<sup>rd</sup> -SPRING BREAK

April 4<sup>th</sup> -PARCC testing window opens

April 10<sup>th</sup> -SAT test for juniors at CMHS

May 4<sup>th</sup> -SIP day and early dismissal

May 19<sup>th</sup> -CMHS graduation

May 22<sup>nd</sup> -current last day of school, with no additional cold/snow days taken and we will dismiss at the ½ day mark on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Any additional days taken for cold or road conditions will be made up at the end of the year and continue to tack on to the last day.

***"Achievement for All"***

The calendar committee is currently meeting, and we plan to have the school district calendar approved by the Board of Education next week and out to all parents by the middle of March, at the latest.

### **1% County School Facilities Tax**

On Tuesday, March 20th, 2018, voters in Madison County will have the opportunity to vote on a proposed 1% sales tax to support county schools. This tax is presently supporting school districts in 49 counties across Illinois. The Bethalto School District is projected to receive an additional yearly \$1,450,000 in funding through the tax, about \$590 per student. It is estimated that 30-40% of the revenue generated by the tax will come from individuals living outside of Madison County.

The 1% sales tax is a way for our community to provide a revenue source for our district and schools for facility repairs, improvements, and upgrades so that our students may learn in quality educational environments for years to come. This is locally generated revenue, which means our locally elected school board, not the politicians in Springfield, gets to decide how best to spend it. The revenue does not flow through the state, which means the politicians can't withhold it from our schools and students, as they currently do with other funds.

The 1% sales tax also allows us to provide some property tax relief to our Unit 8 families and residents. In December, our board of education unanimously passed a resolution committing itself to using 50% of the potential \$1.45 million to reduce property taxes for constituents. This equates to approximately \$725,000 of property tax relief. This amounts to an estimated rate decrease of 37 cents, which corresponds to a tax cut of \$123 per \$100,000 for property value or a potential savings of:

- \$123 per year for a \$100,000 home
- \$184 per year for a \$150,000 home
- \$245 per year for a \$200,000 home
- \$307 per year for a \$250,000 home

Jersey Community Unit School District in Jersey County recently lowered its property tax rate by 10 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The Crab Orchard School District in Williams County lowered its property tax rate by 75-80 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. Property tax relief is a reality in other counties and our school board is committed to helping our Unit 8 families and residents as well.

PROPOSITION

MADISON COUNTY REGIONAL  
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

Shall a retailers' occupation tax and a service occupation tax (commonly referred to as a "sales tax") be imposed in The County of Madison, Illinois, at a rate of 1% to be used exclusively for school facility purposes?

☐ YES

☐ NO

The question on the ballot will look similar to the one included in this newsletter. Although the district can't officially come out in support of the sales tax, we are committed to providing district residents with honest information regarding its value to our school community. Please take time to educate yourself about the benefits of the County School Facilities Tax for our school district and district residents. More information can be found at [www.onecentmakesense.org](http://www.onecentmakesense.org).



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### **ADMINISTRATIVE RESTRUCTURING**

I am very excited to announce that we are restructuring our administrative team for the 2018-19 school year. As we bid Ms. Heinz farewell at the end of the school year, we had the opportunity to re-evaluate our current structure. In listening to the individual needs and desires of some of our leaders, keeping in mind the importance of having everyone in a position they can have the greatest impact, and having a vision of greatness for our future, we felt it was time to make some thoughtful decisions that have the potential to have a truly positive impact across the organization.

I recognize change is difficult and hard to understand at times, but change is a constant and often pushes us outside of our comfort zone while leading us towards continual and overall growth within our organization. When I read authors who specialize in leadership they all discuss the importance of being visionary, putting the right people in the right seat on the bus, and recognizing that change can often challenge us to perform and function at even higher levels than we ever thought possible. Decisions like this are never taken lightly and often are accompanied with many sleepless nights, but this is a decision we feel puts the overall needs of the district at the forefront while keeping in mind some of the individual needs and desires of our leaders moving into the next school year.

So, this is what you can anticipate for the 2018-19 school year with your building and district level administrative team:

Bethalto East, Principal – Rachael Leckrone

Parkside, Principal- Aaron Kilpatrick

Meadowbrook, Principal - Kim Wilks

Trimpe, Principal - Adam Miller

Trimpe, Assistant Principal - Laura Gipson

Civic Memorial, Principal - Justin Newell

Civic Memorial, Assistant Principal – Shelby Norris

Civic Memorial, Assistant Principal/Athletic Director - Todd Hannaford

District Office, Curriculum Director - Kelly McClain

District Office, Special Education Coordinator - Jen Weber

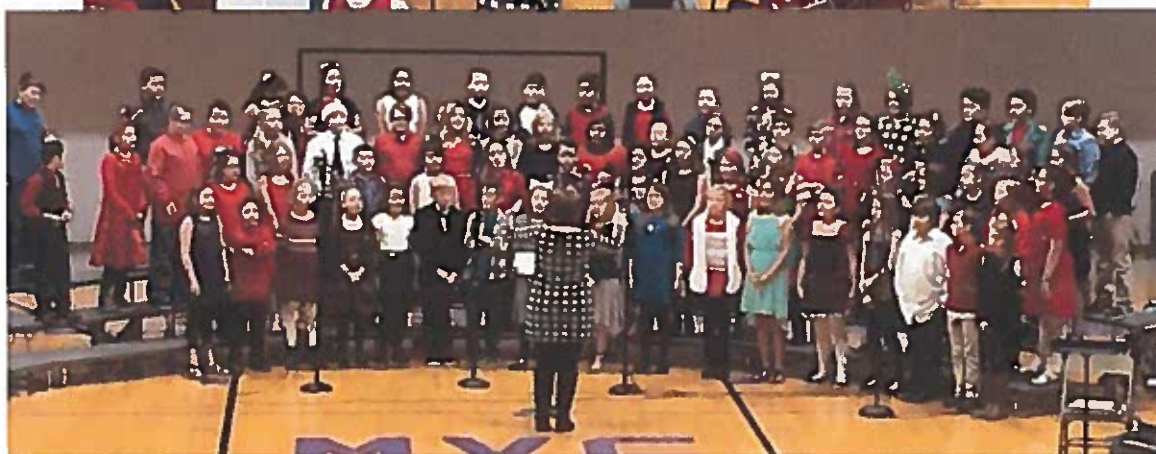
District Office, Business Manager - Barrett Deist

District Office, Superintendent - Jill Griffin

***“Achievement for All”***

### GRATITUDE, SHOUT OUTS AND THANKS

A big thank you and shout out to our amazing Music department. Our Christmas concerts are always a well-attended event across the district. Our band and choir kids sounded amazing too. Our Music teachers begin preparing our students months in advance for our Christmas concerts and we appreciate their time and dedication to our students and fostering a love of music.



(photograph above includes the Meadowbrook students singing with our CMHS band accompanying-something new this year)



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It's a busy week in EagleNation, as we are hosting the Girls basketball Regionals this week, with the championship game this evening. I fully anticipate seeing a sea of purple in the crowd, as our girls face off against the East St. Louis Flyers this evening. The 3-point contest is prior to the game at 5:30. Our girls basketball team also won the MVC title outright this year, which was very exciting for all the girls and coaches. We also have the boys basketball team at home this Friday night in an MVC showdown against Triad. The boys and girls basketball programs have both won tournaments this season and experiencing success.

Caine and Caleb Tyus both advanced to the State wrestling tournament this weekend as freshman, which is an incredible accomplishment. The future looks bright for the wrestling program, as they started 8 freshman this year in the line-up. The girls Pazazz dance team received 6<sup>th</sup> place in the State tournament this year out of over 30 teams competing. They consistently compete at a high-level year after year and we are so proud of them. Nicole King, Erin Zobrist, and Zac Cathorall all made it to sectionals in bowling this year, which is quite an accomplishment. There is much to be excited and proud about regarding our winter sports seasons.

I want to publicly thank our Unit 8 custodians, they have been working diligently to combat the flu and illness with additional disinfecting and extra help in the evenings. We appreciate their efforts in keeping our students as healthy as possible during the cold and flu season. I am certainly ready for spring, and I'm sure you are too. (-: #GoEagles

Respectfully,

Jill Griffin, Superintendent

Twitter: @superjillgriff Follow us on Facebook

***"Achievement for All"***

