



The district recently instituted several new transportation features, including cameras on buses to catch those not obeying the laws. See more on Page 3.

THE BRIDGE

Summer 2023

Volume 46

Issue 4

Serving the students of the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek community since 1976



Time to get...

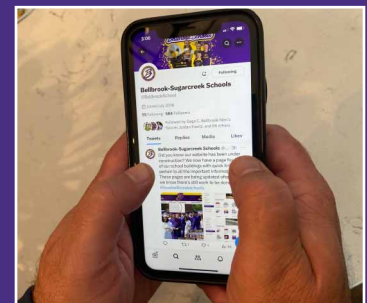
The first day for students (1-12) is August 17, preschool starts Aug. 21 and kindergarten starts Aug. 24-25.

INSIDE



District Updates
Building Start Times
and Busing Schedules

Back to School
Checklist



District Communications
Taking Leap Forward in
Second Year

5 Questions with All
Four District Principals

Upcoming Dates

Better Today than Yesterday, Better Tomorrow than Today



SUPERINTENDENT

District Families,

Welcome to our first ever welcome back to school edition of the Bridge. We hope that this information proves helpful to all those families who have students in the district. For those who don't have students in school, we hope you learn a little more about all of the things it takes to have a successful start to the school year.

I am happy to announce, we will have three full time School Resource Officers serving our district. Officer Stephanie Bennington, who will split her time at Stephen Bell and Bell Creek Intermediate, and Officer Craig Black, who will be at the middle school and the high school are ready to go. We will soon be adding an additional officer from Sugarcreek Township who will allow us to have one officer at both BMS and BHS. Thank you to the city of Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township for splitting the cost with the district for those officers.

We have also hired over 35 new staff members, which includes teachers, paraprofessionals, counselor, assistant principal, principal, media specialists, secretary, bus drivers and custodians. You will get to know them a little better in the next edition of The Bridge. Welcome to the Golden Eagle family!

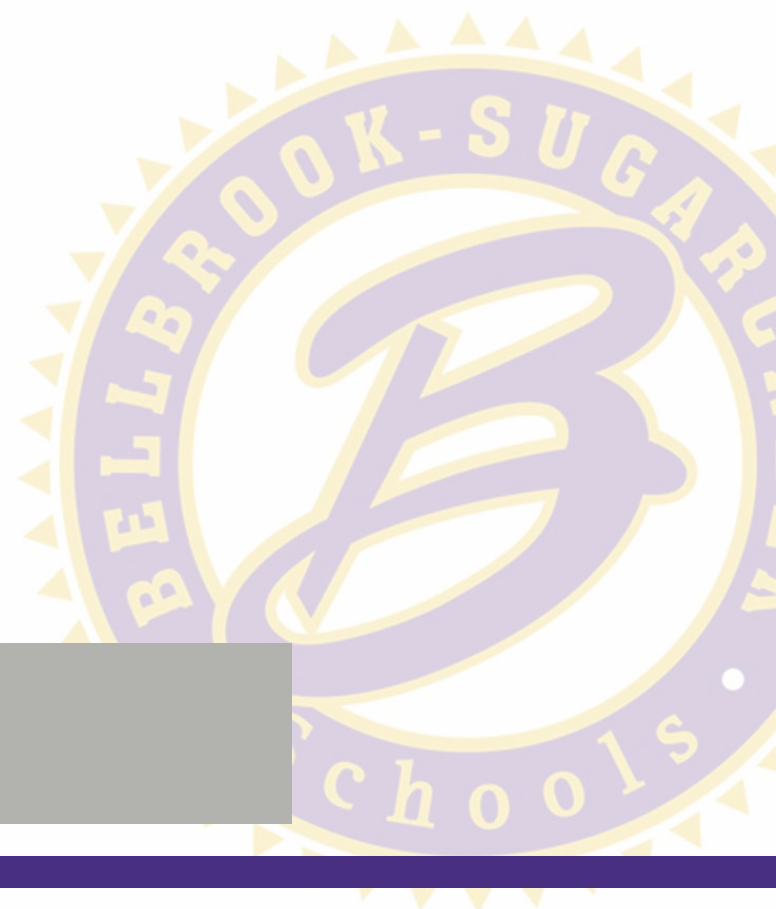
This year, we will continue to build on our past efforts in working to not only provide the best academic experience for each of our students, but also the most positive and safe learning environment at our schools.

Last year, the entire staff was trained on principles of Focus 3, with a framework of Doing the Right Thing, Soar Together, and Pursue Excellence. We use this framework to aspire to be Better Today than Yesterday, Better Tomorrow than Today. This year we will roll this out to students and parents.

As I embark on my sixth year as Superintendent, we have so much to be proud of in our school district. A huge thank you to all those who have worked so hard in order for us to have a great start to the school year. Our students continue to excel in both the classroom and in sports/extracurricular activities. This is a testament to the partnership between our schools, parents, students, and community. Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas A. Cozad".

Superintendent



District Updates Start Times and Busing Schedules

As the first day of school closes in, there are some changes you should be aware of.

Start and end times at the high school and middle school have changed for the 2023-24 school year, both buildings moving their times 10 minutes prior to their previous schedules.

This change was requested due to transportation issues the district was facing.

According to Transportation Coordinator Lori Smith, the move increases the available time to load the buses, leave the schools, and get to the next school at dismissal time. It also drops the average time spent on the bus for students.

“The difficulty we were having was getting one building of students home before we had to be at the next building to get those students to get them home,” Smith said. That was the impetus to develop a three-tiered busing schedule. That gave the district a little bit of flexibility in terms of the number of bus drivers being used, too, but it didn’t fix the time factor.

The middle school will move its start time to 7:20 a.m. with dismissal at 2:20 p.m. and Bellbrook High School will move to 8:05 a.m. to 3:05 p.m. Those schools move their start and end times 10 minutes earlier than the previous year. There are no time changes at Stephen Bell Elementary or Bell Creek Intermediate.

That 10 minutes of time allows the buses to have 25 minutes to take the entire middle school building home as opposed to the 15 it had last year. With her entire staff dedicated to the middle school, though, it should put most students home (or to school) in less than 35 minutes as opposed to the 50 minutes some students

	Building Opens	Classes Begin	Classes End
High School	7:40 a.m.	8:05 a.m.	3:05 p.m.
Middle School	7:05 a.m.	7:20 a.m.	2:20 p.m.
Bell Creek	8:45 a.m.	9:00 a.m.	3:40 p.m.
Stephen Bell	8:10 a.m.	8:15 a.m.	2:55 p.m.

faced riding the bus last year.

“Fifty minutes is a lot of time for kids to be on the bus,” Smith said. “Moving these times really allows me to get my full staff on each one of these buildings and drops their times on the bus.”

Why was the district having these issues? Lack of bus drivers is one of the major factors. Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools, though, are not as hard hit as some others. This district has been trying to hire more drivers, but applicants for the job are few and far between.

“It really takes a unique schedule to be able to be a bus driver,” Smith said. “The hours make it difficult. It has to fit in your schedule.”

Another big change with busing is the available equipment on board. Recently the district invested in new cameras for buses to help catch those who are not obeying the law when it comes to passing buses while they are loading and unloading students. The district takes this matter very seriously as it can quickly become a dangerous situation.

“The bus driver’s job is to safely discharge our students,” Smith said. “The driver stops, checks the mirrors, turns on the lights and extends the stop arm. In a split second, they have to determine if a driver is going to run the stop sign. Our focus is 100% on the children. That makes it hard to get the information of the driver (make and model of the vehicle, color and license plate). By adding these cameras we are going to be able to capture the information.”

Remember, school starts on August 17. Be aware of buses on the road making sure students arrive at their destination safely.

BACK TO SCHOOL CHECKLIST

So much to do, so little time.

It is easy to get lost when it comes to back-to-school items. Between the forms, the sports and activities, the shopping and the general dread that comes from wondering what you forgot to do, we thought we'd at least TRY and give you a little help.

So here is a quick checklist to ensure all your necessities have been accomplished.

And remember **SCHOOL STARTS** on August 17 for Grades 1-12. First day of Preschool is August 21. Gold Kindergarten, as well as the 5-day Kindergarten program, begin on August 24 and Purple Kindergarten starts on August 25.

- Log into FinalForms and complete all forms (and E-sign, forms are complete when the icon turns green)
 - Contact Information
 - Health History and Medical Profile
 - Medications
 - Meningitis Form (HS only)
 - Injuries and Hospitalization
 - Past and Ongoing Health Conditions
 - Emergency Medical Authorization
 - Transportation Information
 - Student Handbook
 - Acceptable Use Policy
 - Free and Reduced Lunch Form
 - Be sure School Fees and Activity Fees are paid in Payschools Central (processing fee) or at any office
 - If your student is an athlete, make sure those forms are filled out, too
- Go back to school shopping for supplies (Aug. 4-6 is the tax holiday)
 - Supply lists can be found at <https://bit.ly/BSSsupplies>
- Bring your student to school (or get them on the bus)
- Attend Open House

Open Houses/Orientations are being held on the following dates: *Kindergarten Orientation by appointment

August 9: 6th-grade orientation, 6-7 p.m.

August 10: 6th-grade orientation, 9-10 a.m.

August 11: Middle School New Student Orientation, 9-10 a.m.
Freshman Orientation, 9-11 a.m.

August 15: Bell Creek Intermediate 3rd grade Meet and Greet, 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Bell Creek Intermediate 4th grade Meet and Greet, 12:30-2:30 p.m.
Bell Creek Intermediate 5th Grade Locker Dropoff, 4-8 p.m.
High School Open House, 7-8 p.m.

August 16: Stephen Bell 2nd Grade Teacher Meet and Greet, 8:15-11 a.m.
Stephen Bell 2nd Grade Teacher Meet and Greet, 12:15-3 p.m.

August 17: Preschool Open House

August 21: Middle School Open House, 6-7:30 p.m.

August 23: Bell Creek Intermediate 5th Grade Open House, 5:45-7:45 p.m.

District Communications Leaping Forward in Second Year

Year 1. Throw all of our ideas at the wall and see what works.

We had a plan, stuck to it, but in the end it was about finding out what was the most effective.

If you are unaware, my name is Henry S. Conte, and I am the Parent/Community Engagement and Communications Coordinator here at Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools. Yes, that's a long title. So, let's just say I'm the communications coordinator.

I write much of what you read here in The Bridge, and the news articles on the website. I run the livestream of the board meetings, create videos for the website, YouTube and the rest of

social media and I run the social media accounts.

Most of the messages that come from the district on the Remind app? Yep, those are usually from me, too. I go into the buildings and take pictures of our students doing amazing things and I have the pleasure of telling you all about them. I also maintain the website, which has been under construction but its overall look and user-friendliness has improved. I was also lucky enough to spend time with the journalism class at the high school and spoke with the gifted 8th grade ELA students on the power of words. I also respond to media requests and help community members with questions about the district when appropriate.

I created and maintain the Eagle Eggs newsletter that comes out weekly, letting you know some of the big events associated with the school and going on in the community. That was a huge undertaking but ultimately, it was well

worth it. As our administrative staff gets more and more tasks put on their plates, they needed some things to be taken off. That was the impetus for the creation of Eagle Eggs, which is why that is the place to go for flyers that used to be sent home.

As mentioned in the first sentence, Year 1 was throwing most things at the wall and seeing what works. Of course, going into any job, you have an idea of what you want to accomplish and then reality sets in and you get pulled in more directions than you think possible. But I've loved it. My coworkers are some of the hardest workers I've ever known and the

students are more talented and intelligent than most people outside of the schools give them credit for.

So, this year, I will give you more of that.

The biggest change you should be looking for this year is, well ... more. We want to continue to let you all know about the amazing things this district and these students are doing. For instance, did you know we were ranked No. 13 of 607 school districts in the state of Ohio, after the last report card based on stars received? When we tell you about those things, we will do it in a more intentional way. Not just giving you numbers, but more about what they mean. And it won't just be in articles and in social media. We are also trying to create more events that community members can attend and see with their own eyes everything the district is accomplishing.

The Eagle Eggs podcast is coming soon. We have already recorded a few and they will come out in a bi-weekly basis (every 2 weeks). I promise it will be entertaining, as well as informative, so make sure to find it when it is released.

We also want your feedback. Think there is something we should let the community know about? Suggestions on the organization of the website? Another way we can connect with the community? Give me a call or an email and let me know. We are all ears.



5 Questions with Dave Hann

This is Mr. Hann's 26th year in education, 14th year with Bellbrook, and 5th as the high school principal.

What's new this year at your school?

We have a new start time, so that's exciting, and I am sure our students will enjoy getting to school 10 minutes earlier (also leaving 10 minutes earlier)! Students will also be permitted to carry book bags to class this year.

Who is new this year at your school?

Cameron Halls, Music
Kristen Krumheuer, French
Ron Gudgell, Paraprofessional
Custodian, Leslie Albrecht
Student Services Secretary,
Cindi Pettit



What's the event you are most looking forward to in the first semester?

The first days of school are always exciting with new faces, routines and classes. Friday night lights with our students and community is a great experience and something everyone should be a part of.

What should people know about your building or staff?

The staff at BHS are the best around and they have the data to back it up. Their hard work and dedication to our students and community is inspiring.

Our students leave here prepared for whatever the world might throw at them and represent Bellbrook well in the "real world."

What is something community members would be surprised to learn about you?

Some people already know this, but I was featured on Who Wants to Be A Millionaire with Regis Philben a lifetime ago (in 2001). It was terrifying ... and I looked ridiculous.

5 Questions with Jenna Hill

Mrs. Hill is starting her 14th year in education and her fifth year in the district. This is her first year as the middle school principal after spending the last four as assistant principal.

What's new this year at your school?

Bellbrook Middle School will be expanding its Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) program in order to continue to highlight all the amazing things the students and staff do each day!

Who is new this year at your school?

Scott Killen, Assistant Principal
Nick Baker, ELA grade 8
Cameron Halls, Band
Lindsey Caupp, Intervention
Specialist
Danielle Schaaf, Intervention
Specialist
Julie Steiner, Math grade 8
Bobbi Ward, Home Economics



What's the event you are most looking forward to in the first semester?

Opening day! We cannot wait to get our students back in the building and get our year started!

What should people know about your building or staff?

We always have "what's best for students" in our minds as we teach, learn, and grow together!

Looking forward, what kind of mark do you hope to leave on the students?

As each student comes through the middle school, our goal is simple - growth! We want each student to grow in their academic knowledge, social-emotional maturity, and citizenship!

5 Questions with Donnie Phelps

Mr. Phelps is starting his 17th year in education, 8th year with Bellbrook and his third year as the Principal at Bell Creek Intermediate.

What's new this year at your school?

The first thing that's new is our assistant principal, Mr. Zack Cline. We will also have a part-time SRO (sharing with Stephen Bell) from the Bellbrook Police Department. We are getting an additional intervention specialist and we will have more time with some of our mental health workers.

Our front office has been remodeled to help house Mr. Cline and our secretaries have a new office suite in the main office area to share.

Who is new this year at your school?

New Staff Members:

Mr. Zack Cline, Assistant Principal

Mrs. Anna DeTorres, 3rd grade

Mr. Patrick Barker, 5th grade ELA & Social Studies

Miss Danielle Lange, 3rd/4th/5th Grade

Intervention Specialist

Miss Mia Cornett, 5th Grade Intervention

Specialist

Ms. Molly Stanifer, Resource Room ELA 3-5

Intervention Specialist

Mrs. Danielle Taylor, School Counselor



What's the event you are most looking forward to in the first semester?

This is hard to narrow down because I love school and everything about it. I'm definitely looking forward to our Meet & Greets and Open House, but even more so the first day of school because there is something magical about it, and the school is just not the same without the sounds of students and teachers. Of course, because Halloween is my favorite holiday and autumn is my favorite season, I can't wait for the annual Great Pumpkin Auction!

What should people know about your building or staff?

Bell Creek is a special place to learn, grow, teach and work. We have such a student-focused and dedicated staff and we are all committed to being a culture of learners. The most fundamental skill for learning, for people of all ages, lies in literacy and reading. Readers are Leaders. We are proud to be part of a district that is ranked #13 of 607 school systems in Ohio and we know that in order to move higher, we have to SOAR together and pursue excellence in extraordinary ways.

Mrs. Malas is the best school nurse I have ever had the pleasure of working with, but most people would probably be surprised to know what a prankster and practical joker she is. I cannot count on two hands the number of times that she has surprised or scared the daylights out of me by furtively placing a fake cockroach, spider, or another creepy insect, inside my laptop, briefcase, desk drawer, boxed lunch, in the staff restroom, or somewhere else where I will encounter it when I least expect it.

5 Questions with Ginger Keeton

Mrs. Keeton is starting her 31st year in education, with 30 of those at Bellbrook. This is her 17th year as principal at Stephen Bell Elementary.

What's new this year at your school?

We are introducing Geodes in each classroom. Geodes are information-rich books that provide emerging readers with an opportunity to build knowledge while practicing foundational reading skills which complement our Foundations Phonics program. This will help our students' needs in the areas of fluency and comprehension.

Who is new this year at your school?

Stephanie Caro, Kindergarten

Madison Jansen, Kindergarten

Andrea Weeks, First Grade

Teacher

Laura Fisher, Reading

Amber McDermott, Digital

Literacy Specialist

Mark Shatto, Evening Custodian

Emily Balazs, Paraprofessional



What's the event you are most looking forward to in the first semester?

I enjoy meeting all the new families and building life-long friendships. The "Kindergarten Scavenger Hunt" evening for families in September is an enjoyable event for the 5- and 6-year olds to share our school with their loved ones. The first-grade and second-grade combined "Party on the Playground with the PTO" will be a new event in September this year. So watch for more details!

What should people know about your building or staff?

We operate as a STAFF FAMILY! Our staff is now a little on the younger side and full of energy.

What is something community members would be surprised to learn about you?

I love to hike in good weather, boat in the summer, and snowmobile in the winter. Working hard and playing hard keeps me balanced!

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UPCOMING DATES

- August 10:** Board of Education Meeting
- August 14:** First Day for Teachers
- August 14:** Band Booster Meeting
- August 16:** Athletic Boosters Meeting
- August 17:** First Day for Students (Grades 1-12)
- August 21:** First Day of Preschool
- August 24:** 5-Day and Gold Kindergarten Begin
- August 24:** Board of Education Meeting
- August 25:** Purple Kindergarten Begins
- September 4:** Labor Day (No School)
- September 11:** Band Boosters Meeting
- September 12:** PTO Meeting
- September 14:** Board of Education meeting
- September 15:** No School (Teacher Professional Development)
- September 20:** Athletic Boosters Meeting
- October 2-7:** Homecoming Week

SIGN UP FOR SENIOR PASSES

Show your Golden Eagle Pride and show up at some games. It's FREE!

Come to the Athletic Department at the high school from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. any weekday in August with proof of address to obtain your pass



 Premier Health



Find Your New Doctor Fast

Choose your new doctor – in as little as three minutes. An easy search, customized to you. Go directly to our Find a Doctor tool by visiting PremierHealth.com/NewDoctor.



All Sports/Activities First Home Games

Sport/Activity	Date	Opponent
Girls Tennis	Aug. 7	Northmont
Girls Soccer	Aug. 15	Lebanon
Golf	Aug. 17	SWBL-SW
Football	Aug. 18	Tippecanoe
Volleyball	Aug. 22	Kenton Ridge
Boys Soccer	Aug. 31	Franklin
Cross Country	Sept. 2	R&I Black Inv.
Marching Band	Oct. 21	Band Invite