



Senior Jada Weiss captured the OHSAA girls wrestling state title at 155 pounds with a 7-4 sudden victory win in the final. She will wrestle in college at Otterbein University.

THE BRIDGE

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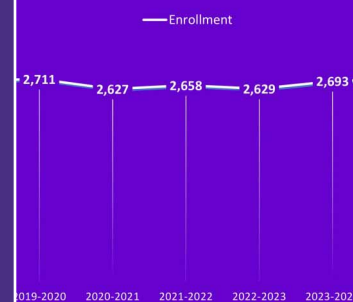
Serving the students of the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek community since 1976

Financial Report

Annual deep dive into the District's current financial standing, including enrollment, per pupil spending, cost-saving resources and state shortfalls.

INSIDE

ENROLLMENT



Enrollment Continues to Stay Steady

Teachers Find Grants for Classrooms



District Chooses New Communication App

Total Tax Burden One of Lowest in the Area

Per Pupil Expenditure Remains Low

Better Today than Yesterday,
Better Tomorrow than Today



SUPERINTENDENT

Thanks for looking at our annual financial update of Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Schools. A part of our District Goals is for us to provide important financial information to the entire community. You will see that information throughout this edition of the Bridge.

We work extremely hard to be fiscally responsible while at the same time earning a 5-star rating from the state and providing a safe and welcoming learning environment. It has been challenging for us to find any financial relief from the state, as we only receive about 25% of our funding from them, and it doesn't appear that we will get any help anytime soon.

When Governor Mike DeWine released his most recent proposed budget plan, it once again involved another reduction in the amount of money coming to the Bellbrook-Local School District from the state.

While there are several simulations of the governor's budget proposal floating around, none of them are favorable to the district or any district like ours. In one simulation, the district would lose just \$2,800 in fiscal year 2026 and \$100K in fiscal year 2027. Another simulation, however, shows the district receiving \$148K less in 2026 and another \$139K less in 2027. Once the budget bill goes through the entire legislative process, unfortunately, I think these reductions are a best – of the worst – case scenario. On page 7, you can see the bar chart illustrating what we have received in state funding vs. what it costs to run our district.

Overall, funding from the state to the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek School District has been relatively flat over the years, especially when you take into account any kind of inflationary factors. Just like any other business, organization, or family, our costs also continue to rise. The district must plan on expenses rising, as utilities, supplies, fuel, and many other necessities continue to reach higher price ranges without any realistic expectation of prices dropping and without any additional funding from the state.

In 2018-19, Bellbrook received around \$6.1 million from the

state. If the most detrimental of the proposed plans mentioned above is adopted, Bellbrook would get \$5.8 million in 2027. It goes without saying the cost of just about everything since 2018 has gone up.

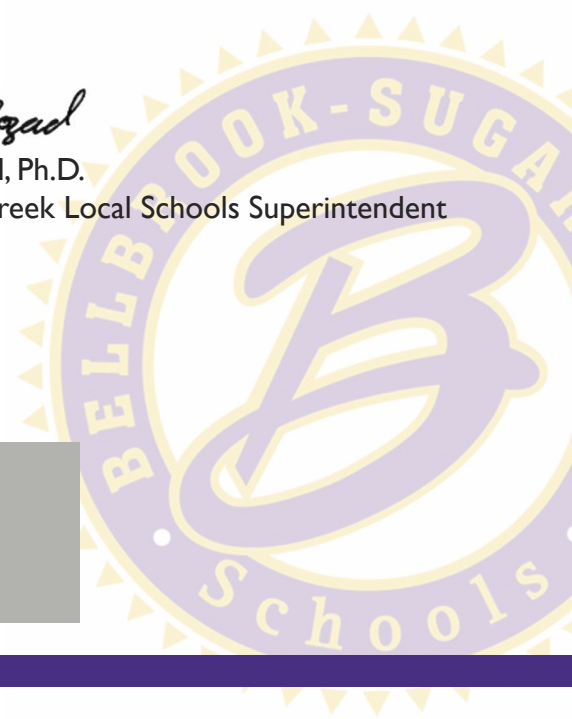
Meanwhile, the state is increasing funding to vouchers and school choice – going from \$1.07 billion in fiscal year 2025 to \$1.25 billion in fiscal year 2027. Community and STEM schools also will see an increase in their funding, from \$1.27 billion in fiscal year 2025 to \$1.42 billion in fiscal year 2027. During that time, public schools will see a decrease in funding dropping from \$8.39 billion in 2025 to \$8.37 billion in 2027 if the bill passes as proposed by the governor.

Additionally, private and public schools do not play by the same rules when it comes to academics or finances. State Report Cards are only for public schools, not private. Private schools do not submit 5-year forecasts or go through the same scrutiny when it comes to financial audits either. Public schools also are responsible for busing private school students to their school of choice at the district's cost, so long as that student is within 30 minutes drive time.

The way the current system is set up forces communities like ours to continue relying heavily on local tax dollars. We thank the entire community – our 5-star community – for all of your support and we hope this financial issue provides important information to you about OUR school district. Don't hesitate to reach out to myself or our new treasurer Amit Gautam if you have any questions.

Go Eagles!

Douglas A. Cozad, Ph.D.
Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Local Schools Superintendent



District Teachers Explore Other Options When it Comes to Classroom Funds

Early in March, the Greene County Career Center announced that three Bellbrook teachers won nearly \$10,000 in grants to study career exploration in their classes. Another local foundation, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Education Foundation recently announced its spring classroom grants, too.

Across the district, teachers often look for new and exciting ways to teach their students, keeping an eye on lowering the financial burden to the taxpayers.

Jenny Nickol at Bellbrook Middle School, Emily Crider at Stephen Bell Elementary and Jill Culler at Bell Creek Intermediate each were awarded grants from the GCCC based on the proposals they wrote a few months earlier in hopes of bringing more career exploration into their classrooms.

Nickol, who received the largest grant – and second largest in the county – wrote her proposal centering on coding.

“The goal of this project is to prepare students for future careers by developing their coding, computational thinking, and problem-solving skills through hands-on learning with BBC Micro:bits and Code.org’s Unit 6: Physical Computing,” Nickol wrote in her proposal.

“By incorporating structured classroom activities and project-based learning, students will develop critical workforce readiness skills such as problem-solving, logical thinking, and digital literacy. ... ”

Career readiness is not just a focus with



our students in the middle school and beyond. Indeed, steps are being taken at the youngest levels to be sure the question of “what do you want to do when you grow up?” can be answered in a thoughtful way.

Crider’s second-grade class will also go through an immersive experience.

She wrote: “Our project will expose students to diverse career paths and industries by transforming each second-grade classroom into a different career station. Each station will represent a unique profession, ranging from healthcare and engineering to the arts, education, and public service. As students rotate through each ‘career room,’ they will participate in hands-on activities, simulations, and discussions designed

to introduce them to the tasks, skills, and roles associated with each career.”

Jill Culler won the final GCCC grant, which will be a field trip. Her students will go to the GCCC to learn about careers and opportunities for learning when they enter high school in a few years. That grant will cover the busing to and from the career center.

Another source of funding that teachers look to year after year is the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Education Foundation. The BSEF provides grants to teachers and group leaders for a number of different reasons.

The most recent winners of the grants were given to the Drone Team for obstacle course equipment (\$450) and timing equipment (\$755), giving the three-time national championship-winning team \$1,205 for the future of the group.

Bellbrook Middle School also benefited from the BSEF, as the entry fees for District and State Science Day have been funded by the BSEF in the amount of \$750. Covering those fees goes a long way in making sure the annual science fair is a success.

The BSEF also makes sure every seventh grade student gets to experience the Challenger Center in downtown Dayton and their yearly space exploration. That grant covers \$2,000 in fees.

The final grant the BSEF approved this year was \$1,000 for sensory items for Stephen Bell. That will result in crayon tubs, headphones, ADHD focused movement tools for calming, interactive sensory bins and more.

District Enrollment Stays Steady

Day after day, plan after plan, house after house going up and yet, enrollment remains steady throughout the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek School District.

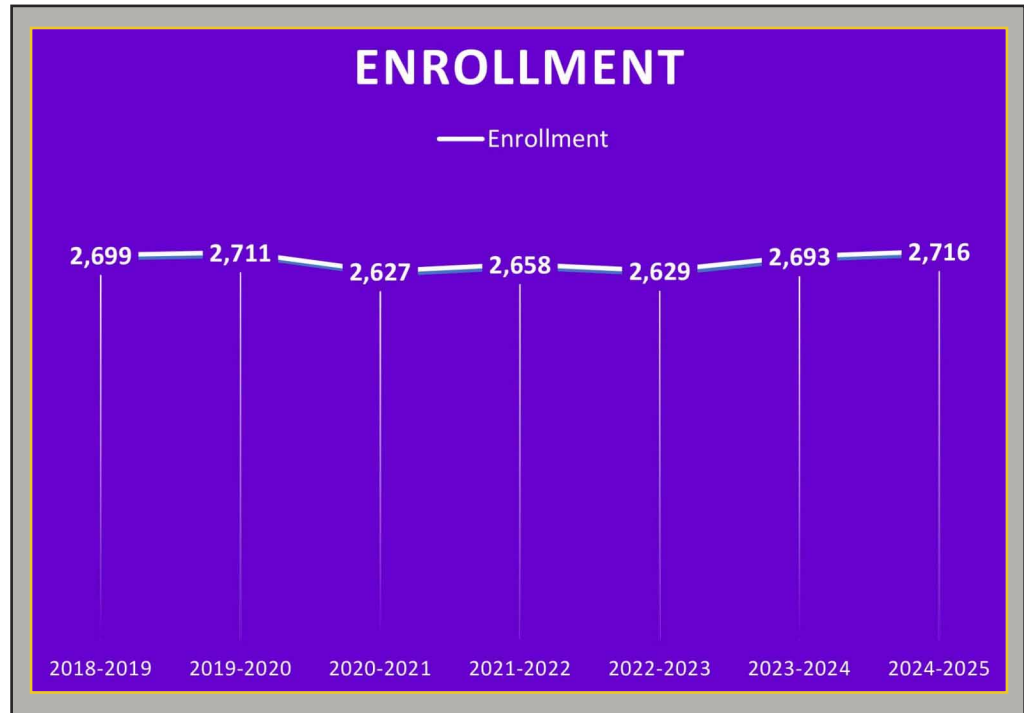
With another 80+ houses planned right next to the middle school in the coming years, the district still does not expect to see an untenable influx of students in the near future.

Years ago, when there was a boom in the construction of homes and apartments in the City of Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township – there was the expectation that district enrollment would rise, but the numbers say the district hasn't seen a significant bump in its student population.

This school year, the district has 2,716 students in its buildings, an increase of just 23 total students from the 2023-24 school year. That means the district is near, but still below what enrollment was in 2006 – the highest enrollment has been – which was 2,768.

The chart illustrates the last seven school years, showing the district jumped to over 2,700 students just before COVID, and has just now returned to that level.

The current class of Kindergarten – the



smallest in a very long time – is about 150 students, with 141 enrolled for the 2025-26 school year as of March 18, however, the expectation is to have about 170 students in the incoming class, close to the district's six-year average.

This is one of the reasons the Board of Education recently cemented its plan to divest of the old Sugarcreek Elementary School building. The district kept it for a number of years in case the expected spike in students came, but without evidence of the building's need

in the near future – as well as the cost of renovations to make the building usable for students in our updated digital age and the need to update for accessibility – the usable life of the building for district purposes has come to an end.

Though the chart might seem as though there are big jumps, enrollment year-to-year has varied by only about 90 students at the most – about seven students per grade level on average, meaning about one extra student per classroom.

Back *to* School WITH CLASS

Visit the School District's Booth during the Sugar Maple Festival to order your Student's "Class of" T-shirt for your back-to-school attire. All profits from the sale will go to BSEF Teacher Grants.



Per Pupil Expenditure Remains Low as District Focuses on Costs

Outside of educating students, the Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Local School District has only a handful of focuses.

One of those is how we use the money given to us by taxpayers. The District goes to great lengths to ensure every dollar is used wisely and we put as much into educating students as possible. In fact, the district spends less than the state average and similar districts when it comes to educating students.

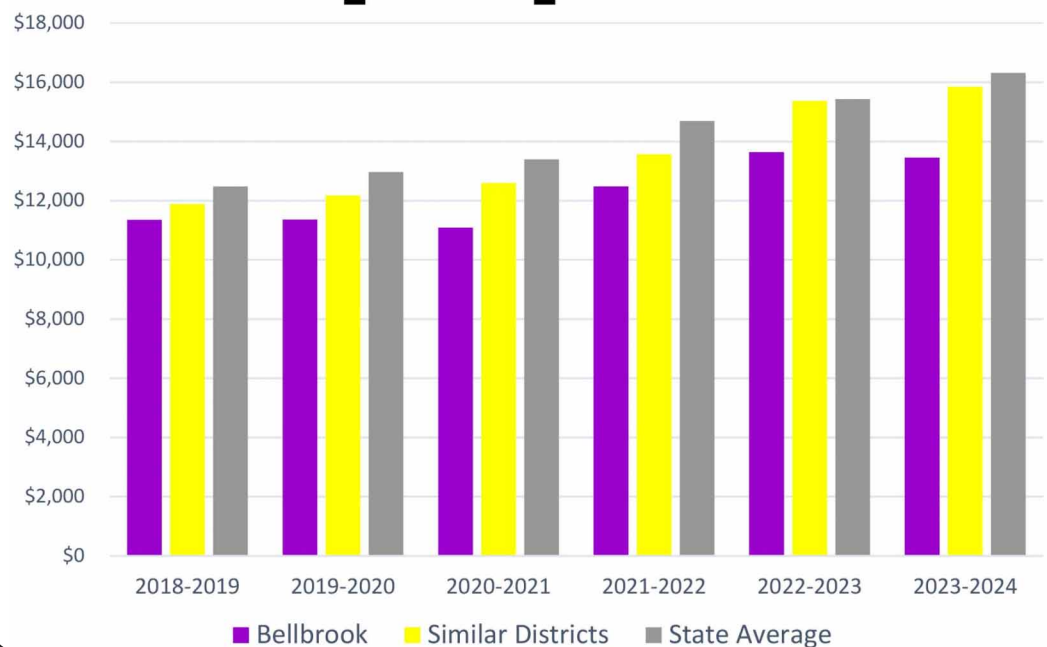
And with two consecutive years of five-star report cards – as well as all the stellar report cards the district has received over the past decades – the evidence is clear that we both educate our students well and use the money we have to do it wisely.

Since the 2018-19 school year, our district has spent less than other districts across the state on average spend on education per pupil and also less than similar districts.

state in terms of funding than both the state average and the average of similar districts.

This past school year, the district spent \$13,452 per pupil for


Per Pupil Expenditure



But there's a reason for that – beyond being fiscally responsible. We also receive less from the

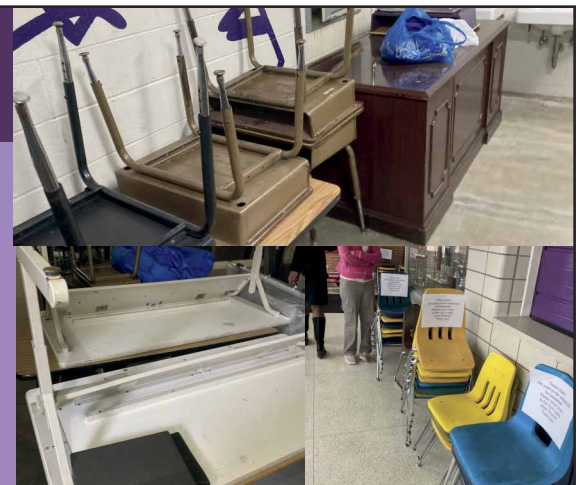
education. Similar districts spent \$15,848 and the state average was higher than that, at \$16,311.

DISTRICT GARAGE SALE

 at Bell Creek Intermediate
3777 Upper Bellbrook Rd.

- ✓ June 14 From 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.
- ✓ Desks and chairs ✓ Filing Cabinets
- ✓ Tables ✓ Gym Equipment
- ✓ Lots more!

**All Profits
to BSEF**





Total Tax Burden One of Lowest in Area for Our Financially Stable District Families

In the Spring Edition of the Bridge in 2024, we shared with families who read this newsletter something you probably already know. In one year, not much has changed. The tax rate paid by the people who own homes and have good paying jobs in our area – The City of Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township – are in a very reasonable range.

This year we updated the numbers to show what people would pay in taxes each year if they owned a home valued at \$350,000. The median home price in our area is about \$357,000, according to the Greene County Auditor.

And though our two municipalities do not collect income taxes, we based that on \$150,000 total family income, which is also close to the median household income in our area to show a complete picture of the tax liability for the area's average homeowners.

Based on the value of a \$350K home, residents in Sugarcreek Township pay \$7,489 per year – or \$624.09 per month – in real estate taxes. It's similar in the city, at \$7,665 per year and \$638.75 per month.

When it's compared to places similar to our area – cities like Beaver Creek,

Kettering, Centerville and Oakwood – it's actually quite a favorable comparison.

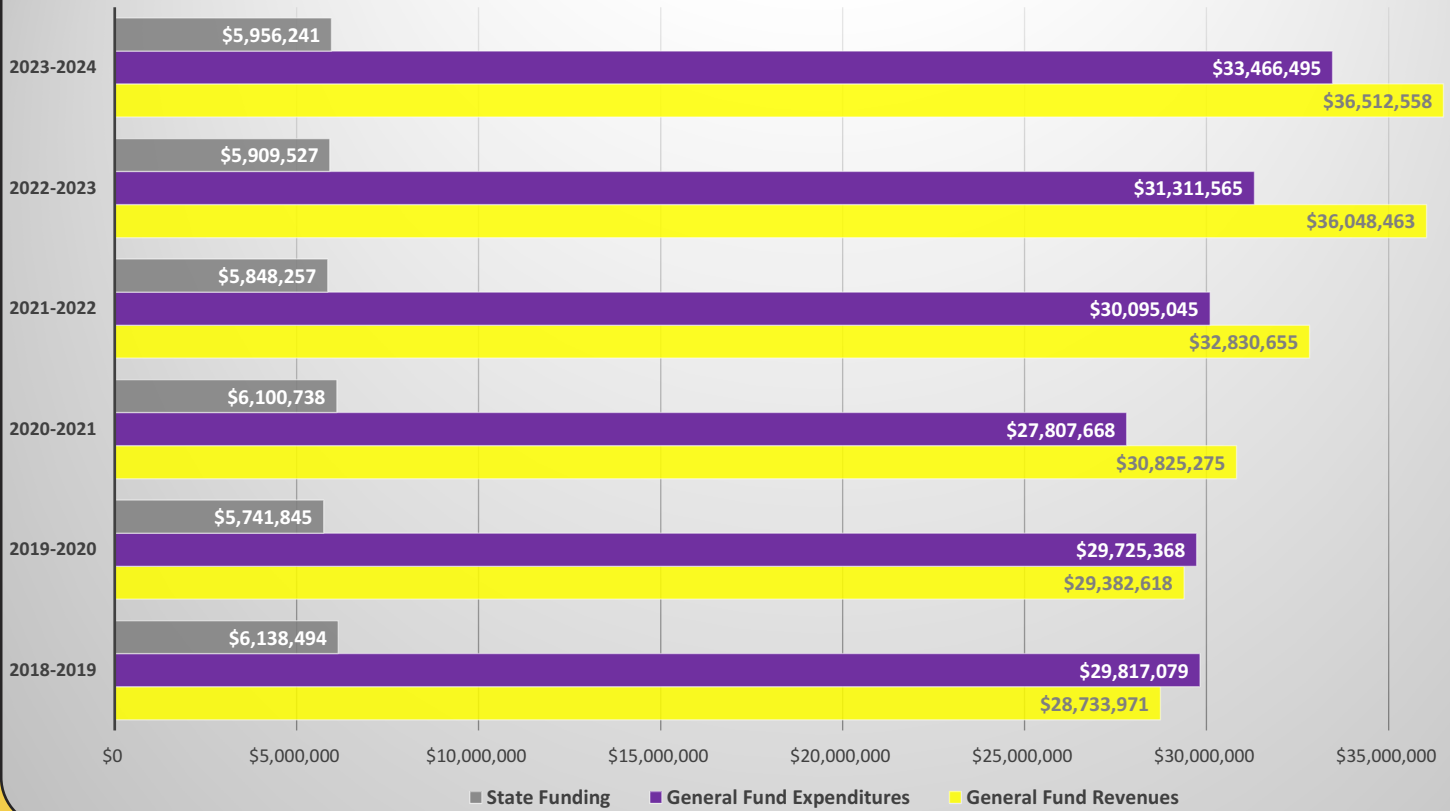
Beavercreek residents pay \$1,126 more per year than Bellbrook City residents in their real estate taxes when comparing homes values at \$350K, while Xenia and Fairborn are just a touch lower, but both have City income taxes, raising the annual tax burden well above the threshold here. Oakwood is significantly more expensive before the city income tax is added.

So why does it seem like residents in our area pay more in taxes?

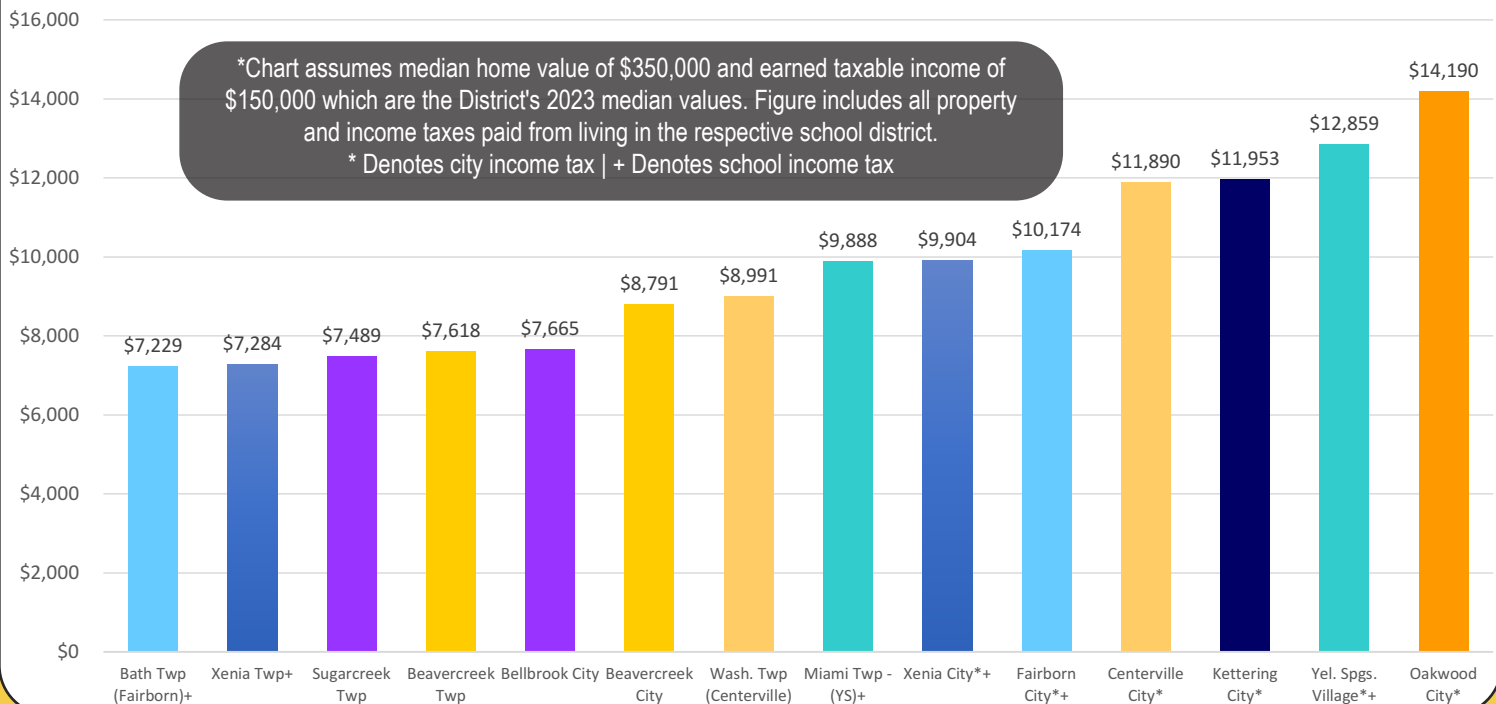
According to a study on Realtor.com, the home values are higher in our area than most. Only Oakwood, Yellow Springs and Beavercreek have a higher average house price than Sugarcreek Township and the City of Bellbrook. Centerville is close behind and then a wide margin before Kettering and Xenia home values come into play, which are close to the state average, which sits at \$228,988, according to Zillow.

So in layman's terms, people in the Bellbrook and Sugarcreek Township areas simply have higher-valued properties, but do not have a higher tax rate.

State Funding vs. General Fund



Tax Affordability Comparison





ParentSquare

Parent Square is District's Choice for Next Communication App

The Bellbrook-Sugarcreek Local School District is excited to announce that it is moving to ParentSquare beginning in the 2025-26 school year to replace the Remind notification app.

ParentSquare will be the primary information-sharing apparatus for the district in sending alerts, and messages from the district, as well as individual school building administration and teachers and coaches. With ParentSquare, parents can enjoy photos posted by teachers, fill out forms and permission slips, sign up for parent-teacher conferences and much more. School staff and parents can engage in both one-to-one and group messaging with real-time language translation. Teachers also can make calls through the app on their personal device while still maintaining their privacy.

ParentSquare, thanks to its purchase of Remind last year, became the most used communication platform by schools across the country, serving more than 38,000 districts. As many of you know, the District currently uses Remind. With ParentSquare's purchase, it made sense to make this move as well.

While this is a change and thus people can be apprehensive about it, make no

mistake, this is a HUGE step up to a robust platform that not only works well behind the scenes on our end, but is an enormous improvement on the parent end. It is currently being used by Beavercreek, Centerville, Greeneview, Yellow Springs and many more throughout the Dayton area.

To answer a few questions:

WHY NOW? We are making the change and announcing it now so there is plenty of time to know about it. We are working on it on our end every day so when we officially roll it out (you'll have plenty of notice) we won't have too many bumps in the road.

WHO WILL USE IT? Once trained, everyone in our district will be expected to use the app for messaging. There are tons of ways to communicate through the app and still keep everyone's privacy intact.

DO I HAVE TO USE THE APP? Nope. While the App is easily the best and most accessible and convenient choice for most, you can still elect to get messages through text or email. Or you can use the desktop version.

DO I HAVE TO HAVE BOTH APPS? Nope. Parent Square is being tested by our JV and varsity baseball teams this

spring, and they are providing valuable feedback. Remind will no longer be used by the district in any way as of the start of the 2025-26 school year, but still might be used through part of the early summer. We will announce a specific launch date when we are closer.

WHO CHOSE THIS? Our Communications Coordinator studied the best options as far as parent experience and presented it to the Technology Department, the Data Assessment Coordinator and the Superintendent. It was sent internally through our Tech Review Committee to determine if the technology would work on our end and whether it would protect our student data appropriately. When everyone signed off and saw it was the best choice, and through more than a year's worth of conversations with ParentSquare, the district signed the paperwork and we got the ball rolling.

WHAT ABOUT TRAINING? Of course, our staff will be trained, but there also will be opportunities for you to learn how to use the app and get a little bit of help. Keep an eye on your email in the future so you'll know when that's coming. In truth, the app is VERY user-friendly, so we think you'll be able to pick it up without a problem.



SPRING GARAGE SALE

APRIL 9-11, 9AM-5PM

APRIL 12, 9AM-12PM

Lions Grange Center, behind 51 S. East St.

ACCEPTING DONATIONS

Drop off items the previous week from 10am-3pm
Call 937-848-4693 or 937-848-2164 prior to drop-off

BELLBROOK LIONS CLUB

We Serve Bellbrook/ Sugarcreek for Community Spirit, Youth Development, World Health and Community Improvement



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BHS Winter Sports Update



Weiss Wins State Title

Senior Earns School's First Girls Wrestling Championship; Girls Basketball Wins Fifth Straight SWBL Title

Jada Weiss is the most recent wrestling state champion in Bellbrook history, taking the top step of the podium on March 9 at the Schottenstein Center in the 155 weight class as she claimed an overtime victory against the same wrestler she lost to in the District semifinals the previous week.

Weiss was far from a favorite going in, but she earned her way to the No. 1 spot starting the tournament with a 28-3 record.

In the first round on Friday, Weiss defeated Razilee Wisseh of Canal Winchester, 7-2. In the second and third round on Saturday, she qualified for the final match by taking down Reghan Koch of Austintown-Fitch, 11-9, and then moving into the finals by default – though she had a 13-4 lead – against the No. 1 seed in the entire weight class, previously undefeated Rejan Alhashash of Avon Lake.

In the finals, Weiss was up against Natalie Carlisle of Lebanon, whom she lost to in

the District semifinals, 8-5. Weiss scored a point as regulation expired and as time was about to run out in the first overtime period, she defended a headlock, slipped the move for a takedown to win 7-4 and claim the title.



“I was just trying to remind myself about all the things I put in to be there and I had earned my spot to be there and make it there for a reason,” Weiss said. “I kept trying to take shots and wear her down. (in overtime) I knew she wasn’t going to take any shots, so I tried to stay on the offensive. I figured if I kept shooting I’d

either get a stall call or a take down.”

BASKETBALL

Both the boys and girls basketball teams finished as district runners-up this season though several of their members broke individual records.

On the boys team, CJ Scohy broke the all-time and single-season marks for assists, (332 and 125, respectively). Austin Webb hit the 1,000-point plateau this season, and as a junior, broke the all-time 3-pointers made record.

“I didn’t know until a few games after it happened,” Scohy said. “They told me at practice. It was truly an honor.”

On the girls side, Libby Bunsold set the single-game and single-season steals record, swiping 18 on December 18, against Valley View and 185 throughout the season while averaging more than 7 steals per game.

“Honestly, I didn’t even realize that I was close to breaking the record while in that

game,” Bunsold said. “Sure, I thought I had a decent amount of steals, but not THAT many. So when I found out I broke the record I was really excited, but I definitely have to give credit to the way our team pressures people.”

The girls team also captured its fifth straight Southwestern Buckeye League title with an undefeated record (8-0) in league play.

As a result, seniors Jordan Frantz, Izzy Painter, Eva Koesters and Bella Beeghly completed a rare feat in winning six SWBL girls basketball titles. The foursome was part of seventh- and eighth-grade championships in junior high and were SWBL champions all four years of high school. The groups record against SWBL competition over the last four years is 50-3.

SWIMMING

Michelle Dean highlighted the season in the pool, making it to state to compete in a pair of events and finishing on the podium.

Dean finished 5th in the 200 freestyle at the state finals, besting her own school record in a time of 1:51.10. She finished 14th in the 100 backstroke.

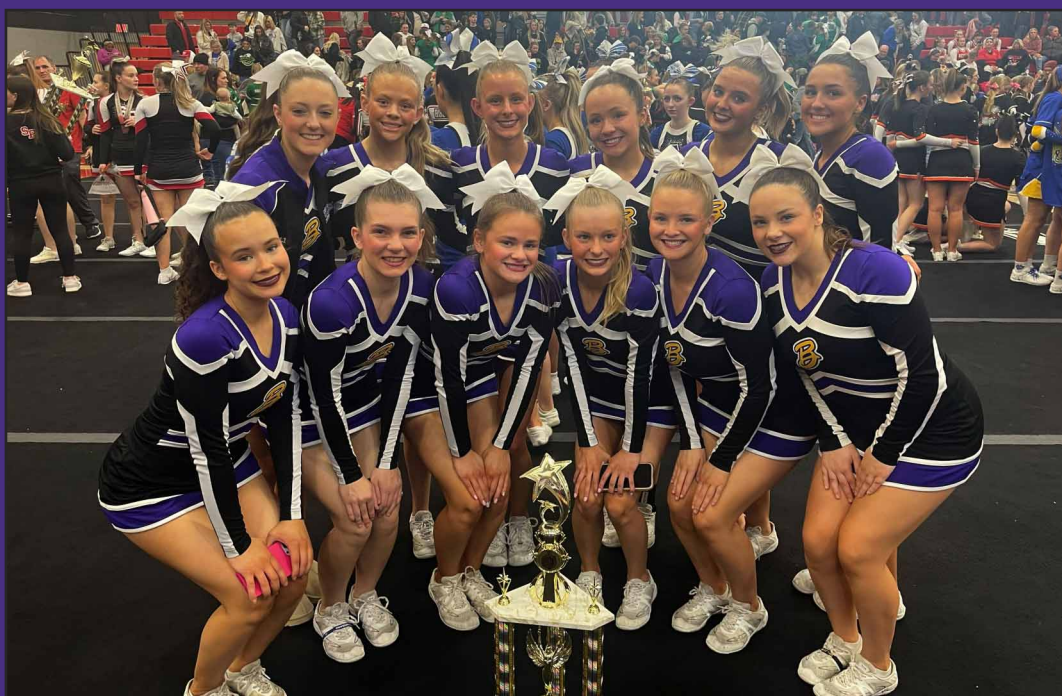
“I love swimming so much because of my friends and opportunities to meet new people, regardless of how overwhelming the sport can sometimes be,” Dean said.

Mia Nazarenus qualified for the state diving meet for the 3rd year in a row and finished 13th this season.

CHEERLEADING

The Traditional Competition Cheer squad took third place at the OASSA State Competition and the Game Day Competition Cheer squad finished fourth during the OASSA State competition in February. Traditional also claimed the SWBL title.

**BHS Senior Jordan Frantz contributed to this report.*



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UPCOMING DATES

April 5: District Art Show
April 7: Music Boosters
April 8: PTO Meeting
April 10: Board of Education meeting
April 12: Supportive Peers Easter Extravaganza
April 16: Athletic Boosters
April 18: NO SCHOOL
April 24: Board of Education meeting
April 24: Military Ball
April 25: 2-hour Early Dismissal
May 1-3: High School Musical
May 5: Music Boosters
May 5: Elementary Art Show
May 5: Spring MS Band Concert
May 5: Group Board Meeting
May 6: BCI at Dragons
May 6: Spring Band concert and awards
May 7: Spring MS/HS Choir
May 8: FUN RUN
May 8: Board of Education meeting
May 12: Marching Band Icebreaker
May 13: 6th Choir Concert
May 13: PTO Meeting
May 14: Senior Recognition Ceremony
May 14: Supportive Peers Senior Recognition Ceremony
May 15: 6th Band Concert
May 15-16: Kindergarten Celebration
May 17: GRADUATION DAY
May 21: Athletic Boosters
May 21: 2nd grade luau
May 22: Preschool Graduation
May 22: 1-hour Early Dismissal
May 23: Last Day for Teachers

A photograph of a family (a woman, a man, and a child) running and playing on a grassy hill. The woman is in the foreground, running. The man is behind her, also running. The child is on a yellow bicycle, being pushed by the man. The Premier Health logo is in the top left corner.

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.