Dear Big Rapids Public Schools’ Family,

Thank you for your continued understanding and flexibility as we work through this unique winter. We are in the process of making up the days and instructional time we missed in an effort to meet the requirement of 180 days and 1098 instructional hours. We appreciate your communication and willingness to make up some of the days and hours by allowing us to extend and add some days throughout the school year. Having full days of school on February 15th, 18th and April 19th has allowed us to regain some of the instructional time we have lost. We have, and will continue to, make decisions that are always focused on keeping our kids safe.

Please review the rest of this edition of the Cardinal Connection to see some of the great things going on in our district.

(continued on page 2)
We have asked each school to share some information about the successes that have taken place this year. It is great to see just how many amazing things our kids have accomplished in just the first half of the year! Our incredible staff and students continue to impress us each day!

One area we hope you review is our Respect and Dignity campaign. The goal of this initiative is to help our students understand the importance of treating others the way they want to be treated and recognizing that each individual is important. We have worked to educate each one of our students and staff in this program, and we hope to educate our parents and community also. Please take a look at the included information and let us know if you have any questions.

We also ask that you take a look at the information about the upcoming annual renewal of our Operating Millage. The election will take place on May 7th. We have included updates on the 2018 Bond Proposal projects. In addition, there is a description of the projects completed with our sinking fund. We would not have been able to make these improvements without the support of our community.

Finally, you will find information included about enrollment. If you have a child ready to enroll in Kindergarten, we will have Cardinal Kindergarten Parent Orientation on Wednesday, March 20th, at Big Rapids High School. It will run from 5:00-6:30pm. If you are unable to attend, you are more than welcome to stop by our Central Office to enroll or call (231) 796-2627. We are located at 21034 15 Mile Road - next to the High School. Enrollment forms can also be completed online on our website at www.brps.org.

As you will see, we have much to be proud of at Big Rapids Public Schools. Big Rapids Public Schools is an exceptional place for our students to learn because of the commitment of our staff, our parents, and our community. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do for our students. Together, WE are BR!
Big Rapids Public Schools has taken on a new initiative to further improve school safety throughout the district. Our program, RESPECT AND DIGNITY AT ALL TIMES, has been delivered to students at all grade levels and to all BRPS staff. We have set up a task force that will meet regularly to discuss issues of safety throughout the district. The main goal of this program is to educate students, staff and families regarding school safety issues, implement a common language as it refers to social norms and issues like bullying, and to set expectations for all persons involved with Big Rapids Public Schools.

The first thing all staff and students have learned is the definitions of respect and dignity, and the differences between teasing, conflict, and bullying. Students and staff were given time to practice what they would do in certain situations while maintaining respect and dignity for others at all times. Students were taught how to report situations in which they believe they are or another student is in need of help from an adult. Safety education will be ongoing at all levels by school counselors and staff.

Graphics like the one here can be seen district-wide. They remind all students, staff, families and visitors on how to treat others, what to look for and how to define the behavior they may be a witness to or be a part of. The graphic is simplified for elementary-aged students, as seen here as well.

Please look forward to seeing more information sent home and feel free to contact the task force at any time with any safety concerns you may have at stopbullying@brps.org. These emails will be reviewed by the task force.
BIG RAPIDS MIDDLE SCHOOL was measured on five categories representing school quality/student success:

- Chronic Absenteeism
- Advanced Coursework
- Postsecondary Enrollment
- Access to Art/Physical Education
- Access to a Librarian/Media Specialist

Average BRMS M-STEP Scores v. MOISD:

- 5th Grade ELA and Math Scores: ↑11pts
- 6th Grade ELA and Math Scores: ↑4.7pts
- 7th Grade ELA and Math Scores: ↑10pts
- 8th Grade ELA, Math, & Social Studies Scores: ↑1.7pts

BIG RAPIDS ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS were measured on student growth, proficiency, success, school quality and participation.

Average BRMS M-STEP Scores v. MOISD:

- 3rd Grade ELA and Math Scores: ↑11.8pts
- 4th Grade ELA and Math Scores: ↑22.2pts

BIG RAPIDS VIRTUAL SCHOOL provides a non-traditional path for students to have the opportunity to graduate High School.

Learning any time, any place, any way, any pace.
The data presented in this spread come from the following sources:

MI School Data, www.mischooldata.org
Operating Millage Renewal F.A.Q.'s

WHAT IS THE OPERATING MILLAGE RENEWAL?
The operating millage renewal is to continue to levy the 18 mills on non-homestead properties. Your principal residence is exempted by law. The State of Michigan requires us to levy this tax in order to receive our per pupil foundation allowance.

HOW IS THE OPERATING MILLAGE RENEWAL DIFFERENT FROM THE SINKING FUND AND BOND PROPOSAL?
The operating millage renewal is NOT paid by those that only have a primary residence in our district. It only applies to local businesses, industrial and commercial property, or property that is not the owner’s primary residence.

WHY IS THE OPERATING MILLAGE SO IMPORTANT?
The Operating Millage comprises about $3.4 million of BRPS’s operating revenues. These funds are used to pay for staffing, purchase textbooks and classroom supplies, and operate the district’s school buildings. The State of Michigan assumes school districts levy and collect the full 18 mills, and subtracts this amount from each districts per pupil allowance. For BRPS, this is equal to more than $1,740 per pupil. The state does not make up the difference per pupil if these local funds are not collected.

BRHS Alumni Association asks you to mark your calendars for a special SESQUICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION!

WHEN: Saturday, August 3, 2019
WHAT: Block Party
WHERE: Michigan Avenue, downtown Big Rapids
DETAILS: The Blue Cow and The Raven will offer a buffet meal from 5-7pm. A bar, tent with dance floor and bands will entertain you from 5-11pm. Rick Steinke (Class of 1974) is being recognized as the Distinguished Alumni of the Year along with the presentation of the BRHS Scholarship winner(s). All graduates and the public are welcome to attend this special 150th year celebration. More information will follow about how to reserve tickets for this event.

History of the Sesquicentennial - Records show that the first high school in Big Rapids, called the Union School, was built in 1869 on the corner of Michigan Avenue and Pine Street. Later, in 1881, another high school was built to replace the Union School. This school was called Big Rapids Central School and was built where the current charter school stands today. Big Rapids Central School was used from 1881 to 1924 until the new Big Rapids High School was erected in that same location.

For more information, check out www.brhsalumni.com or follow BRHS Alumni Association on Facebook.
We would like to **Thank Our Community** for helping make the necessary improvements to our school facilities. These improvements significantly improved the safety and learning environments for our students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014</th>
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<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>High School</strong></td>
<td><strong>Middle School</strong></td>
<td><strong>Riverview &amp; Brookside Elementary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Districtwide</strong></td>
<td><strong>High School</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Resurfaced access drive</td>
<td>Repairs to concrete masonry unit blocks in gym</td>
<td>Site work to improve playground water drainage</td>
<td>Roof evaluations</td>
<td>Hand rail in auditorium</td>
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<td>Added 300ft of fencing at soccer fields</td>
<td>Replacement of manual side court backboard hoists with electric</td>
<td>New play pad &amp; play equipment structure</td>
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<td>Flooring on stairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Resurfaced 7 tennis courts</td>
<td>Riverview &amp; Brookside Elementary</td>
<td>New fire alarm system</td>
<td></td>
<td>Cement pad under dumpsters</td>
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<td>New reflective stair nosings in auditorium</td>
<td><strong>Virtual School</strong></td>
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<td>Auditorium roof</td>
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<tr>
<td>New water bottle fill station</td>
<td>New roof on annex</td>
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<td>Middle School</td>
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<td><strong>Riverview &amp; Brookside Elementary</strong></td>
<td><strong>Administration Building</strong></td>
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<td>New lockers</td>
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<td>New sanitary drain field</td>
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<td>Riverview &amp; Brookside Elementary</td>
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<td>New gym flooring</td>
<td><strong>2018</strong></td>
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<td><strong>High School</strong></td>
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<td>Roof repairs</td>
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Classrooms & Learning

- A computer for every student to access during the school day (1:1 technology).
- New band and wood shop equipment.
- Additional classroom space added.
- Flex space for learning/multi-use space addition.
- New classroom furniture at all levels.
- Existing classroom remodeling at all schools.
Safety, Security & Health

- Additional security cameras
- Replacing aging buses.
- Increased door security.
- Classroom air quality improvements at all schools.

Building & Grounds

- Auditorium improvements: sound systems, scrim and curtains, lighting, storage.
- Multi-purpose field and improving athletic fields and facilities.
- District-wide roof repair and replacements.

Updates as of March 1, 2019

For more information regarding the BRPS Bond visit www.brps.org/bond
Students and staff recognize the importance of maintaining wellness and its effects on academic performance and lifelong overall health. Over the last 4 years, Brookside has participated in several programs and received many grants to promote and improve physical activity, healthy eating habits, and overall student wellness. The Fuel Up To Play 60 Program continues to provide support in this effort with over $11,000 in grant funds which have created many opportunities for students to eat healthy and be physically active in school. Additions at Brookside include new playground accessories, activity sets, classroom brain break supplies, outdoor seating for small groups, enhancements to encourage healthy eating choices and equipment to support our new Universal Breakfast Program.

As of June 2015, Brookside received the prestigious international title of a Leader in Me School!

Our MISSION is to create a culture of student empowerment, recognizing that every student has a voice and can be a leader! We are committed to instilling the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People (Steven Covey) and providing a positive environment for learning.

To check out more information about the Leader In Me program, visit www.leaderinme.org.

Partnerships with Spectrum Health continue to promote physical activity through school Walking Clubs. Brookside continues to participate in yearly initiatives such as National Bike-To-School Day and ACES (All Children Exercise Simultaneously) Day. In recognition of the continued efforts to promote and enhance health and wellness of students through policy and environmental improvements, Brookside received the Michigan School Wellness Award Bronze Level in 2017 and Silver Level in 2018. Brookside students and staff are reaching for gold in 2019!

Leader In Me School

Family Events

- Annual Leadership Day
- Student Leadership Showcase
- Family Night (Reading/Math/Science/Book Fair)
- Science Share Night
- March is Reading Month – Bagels & Books
- Leader in Me Parent Lighthouse Team
- Walk-a-Thon
- Holiday Shop
- Lunch on the Hill
- Track & Field Day
- Carnival
- 4th Grade Send Off

Students and staff recognize the importance of maintaining wellness and its effects on academic performance and lifelong overall health. Over the last 4 years, Brookside has participated in several programs and received many grants to promote and improve physical activity, healthy eating habits, and overall student wellness. The Fuel Up To Play 60 Program continues to provide support in this effort with over $11,000 in grant funds which have created many opportunities for students to eat healthy and be physically active in school. Additions at Brookside include new playground accessories, activity sets, classroom brain break supplies, outdoor seating for small groups, enhancements to encourage healthy eating choices and equipment to support our new Universal Breakfast Program.
Riverview Elementary has an extremely positive school environment which allows students to participate in many positive learning environment activities including spirit week, concerts, plays, book fairs, Title nights, Reflex, parades, field trips, health and fitness and parent/teacher conferences and participates in the Respect & Dignity Anti-Bullying plan. Throughout the school year, Riverview students participate in community service projects, such as book drives, holiday door tag hanging, card-making for our troops and fundraising for specific community organizations.

Technology
Technology has come to the forefront in education so Riverview instructional staff are utilizing an array of tech devices within the classroom for instruction. We are fortunate to have a Smartboard, Netbooks, Chromebooks, Document Cameras, iPads and software programs in the classroom for an enhanced learning experience.
Big Rapids Middle School students participate in community service projects, spending time helping local organizations who serve our community in various ways. The community service programs continue to strengthen the relationships between the school and community and help develop a sense of citizenship for the future leaders of Big Rapids – our kids!

**Manufacturing Day**

8th grade students participated in a local Manufacturing Day! During this community event, BRMS partnered with several local manufacturers and the MOISD Career Center to help expose our kids to the local businesses responsible for many of the great products made in our community and provide a link of classroom to real-world future opportunities.

**Full STEAM Ahead**

Beginning this year, BRMS began implementing a STEM course for 7th grade students as an enrichment learning opportunity. During this course, students are exposed to STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) activities that challenge them to use the skills they learn in the classroom and apply in real-world, project-based situations.

**Community Service Project**

Big Rapids Middle School students participate in community service projects, spending time helping local organizations who

**Robotics**

BRMS students continue to advance our Robotics program. This year we had TWO robotics teams, a 5th/6th grade team and also a 7th/8th grade team. Local fundraising is integral to hosting a robotics team and we appreciate the continued support from local businesses and individuals who make this awesome program a possibility for our kids.

**Respect & Dignity At All Times**

This group initiative, led by our district counselors and social workers, has embarked on a journey to promote Respect & Dignity At All Times for all members of our school community. The work of this team and our BRPS teachers is seeking to promote healthy social behaviors and a culture that all students can thrive in. For more information check out our website at www.brps.org/respectanddignity.

**Color Run**

The Color Run fundraiser organized by the BRMS PTO raised over $20,000 to support students and learning at BRMS! This money is already being used for kids in and beyond the classroom. Our Parent Teacher Organization coordinated the event, which culminated in a color fun run on October 5.
BRHS was Honored as a MIHeartSafe School! Check out www.brps.org for more information about this recognition.

Scholarship Award

BRHS earned a $1000 scholarship offered by the Mecosta County Retired Teachers Association targeting school climate and culture. This scholarship helped fund a school-wide presentation by Davey Muse. Davey is a motivational speaker who shared his life story with us. He shared a message of hope, how to overcome adversity, help yourself be a better person, and make a difference in the lives of other people.

The scholarship has also helped fund our Commendable Cardinal initiative, sponsored by Scott’s Body Shop. Teachers nominated one student each as a Commendable Cardinal. Nominees either demonstrated a positive character, strong work ethic, and/or a “crazy” cardinal -“Be Bold, Be Kind, BR”- type attitude. Selected students were: Ryan Fox, Ann Nelson, Valerie Vandertol, Tyler Herzog, Cody Brown, Logan Jorgensen, Jacob Perrin, Aaron Sheldon, Jake Knopf, Brycen Shively, Kaden Torres, Taylor Williamson, DeMarkus Lee, Hailey Debruyne, Rylin Pickett, Roy Buckley, and Daylyn Ezell (pictured right.)

Marching Band Wins

The Big Rapids High School Marching Band had another very successful fall marching season. Our 2018 show was “Bookmarks from Japan” featuring a wide variety of music and percussion influences. The band successfully defended its Class B championship at the Cedar Springs Invitational in which they have now won 5 years in a row. The band also got straight-A’s at the District I Marching Band Festival in Reed City with another outstanding performance on a cold evening.

Quiz Bowl Success

Quiz Bowl has been invited to participate in the National Small School tournament May 4-6 in Chicago. They qualified by scoring very highly at the Jan Rademacher Quiz Bowl tournament in White Cloud in September. They will host a fund raiser soon to help raise money to pay for hotels and the entrance fee for this tournament. Congratulations Quiz Bowl!

Key Club Service

The Key Club, a student-led community service club that is a part of the Kiwanis Family of service clubs, has had a great first half of the school year. Highlights include:

• An item drive and fund raiser in support of the Big Rapids homeless shelter, Our Brothers Keepers. With the support of students and staff at Big Rapids High School, dozens of items were collected for the shelter along with nearly $300 in cash donations. Thanks to everyone for their support.

• During Trick – or – Treat for UNICEF, fifteen club members collected $250 to help fight neonatal and maternal tetanus around the work.

• In partnership with the Salvation Army, Key Club sponsored an “Angel Tree” project. Toys for 40 area children were collected in this effort. Thank you staff and students! In addition, club members rang the bell for the Salvation Army’s Red Kettle Campaign. Keep up the good work Key Club!
Thanks to the passing of the May 2018 bond, the BRVS lab was outfitted with new technology. The school also received 85 new chrome books, which are loaned out to the students so that they can work “any time, any place, any where, any pace”. Students can access their curriculum anywhere there is an internet connection.

**Incentive**

Students who met their first trimester goals were treated to an afternoon of “Food and Film”. They traveled to Ferris State University where they enjoyed an “all you can eat” lunch at The Quad cafe. After lunch, they went to the high school where they watched a holiday film and snacked on popcorn and pop. BRVS provides a different activity each trimester to reward students who meet their academic goals.

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**MSU Extension Partnership - Cooking Class**

BRVS continued their partnership with the MSU Extension by holding a cooking class geared for teens. Students learned basic culinary techniques and how to make recipes more healthy. Students took a trip to the grocery store where they learned to read labels and shop economically. The class culminated in a cook-off, where two teams prepared dishes for a panel of judges.
Did you know the Athletic Leadership Team re-opened the Cardinal Cave? The group spent a lot of time getting the store ready prior to the Grand Opening in December. The store includes men, women, and youth sizes! We also have hats, backpacks, golf towels, ditty bags and much more! The store is open during varsity events at the high school and you can also stop by the athletic office during the school day to check it out. As a reminder, if you can’t find what you’re looking for at the Cardinal Cave, you can order all of your Big Rapids gear online. Just visit our Athletic Department webpage at www.brps.org/athletics and click on Cardinal Gear Shop. The online store allows you to customize your gear and ships directly to your home!

**Winter Sports Round-Up**

Girls and boys varsity basketball both swept Reed City this year and are gearing up for another postseason run. The girls will travel to Benzie Central for the start of districts while the boys will head to Ludington.

The girls’ bowling team finished second in the CSAA this season. Chloe Mathewson received first team all-conference honors and Hope Thebo honorable mention. Both the boys and girls’ bowling teams are preparing for the upcoming regional tournament.

Hockey once again claimed the 131 Cup Challenge with a big win over Cadillac. The two time defending regional champions look to defend their title in the upcoming tournament.

Wrestling finished their season as a team, but had three wrestlers place in the individual district finals. Congratulations to Ashton Sova (2nd), Matthew Henderson (3rd), and Kaelan McBride (4th) on advancing to the regional tournament!

**Scholar-Athlete Award Recipients**

We are excited to announce that we had two student-athletes selected as MHSAA/Farm Bureau Scholar-Athlete Award recipients. Pierce Morrissey and Kamryn Cushway were selected as two of the 120 finalists out of over 1,600 applicants! Of the 120 finalists, thirty-two were selected to receive a $1,000 scholarship and will be honored at the boys’ basketball state finals in March. Congratulations to Pierce as he was selected as one of the thirty-two winners.

**Spring Sports host tryouts beginning March 11th!**

BRPS will be hosting the district tournaments for baseball, softball and girls’ soccer this spring. Bring on the sunshine as our teams are ready to get outside and compete this spring season!
Big Rapids Public Schools strives to equip children with the qualities and characteristics that lead them to success in the classroom as well as in life. Our students are educated on how to be lifelong learners and guided to being productive adults. Join us for the "Cardinal Kindergarten Parent Orientation".

Get informed by viewing a presentation from our Cardinal Kindergarten team about our Kindergarten program, consult with Kindergarten teachers about curriculum, bring your child’s birth certificate and immunization records to register your child for the 2019-20 school year, visit the Health Department on site to complete your child’s required vision screening or to print immunization records.

**WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2019**

**5 - 6:30pm at BR High School Rotunda**

To ensure readiness, Kindergarteners need to be five years of age by September 1, 2019. However, parents or legal guardians retain the sole discretion to determine whether or not to enroll their child if the student is five years of age not later than December 1, 2019.