

Monday, August 1, 2016

Dear Bruin families,

Just a year ago, I was writing this letter to introduce myself to you as Bear River's new principal; in some ways, that seems like yesterday and in other ways, it seems like a lifetime ago! I was excited and nervous a year ago -- not sure how I would fit in or whether your community would accept me (much like our students feel when starting high school). I have been blown away by the incredible support, kindness, and love I have experienced in this past year. This community is truly something special and there is nowhere else I would rather call home and no colors I would rather wear than the cardinal and gray.

As I have spent the last year immersing myself in this culture, I have discovered:

- Bear River students are the kindest, most compassionate, lovely human beings a person could hope to know
- Our staff LOVES these kids and this school -- they are creative, thoughtful, dedicated professionals who inspire me every day
- Our families and community are unbelievably supportive and connected to our school, willing to pitch in and support wherever they can

We are determined to make Bear River High School the school no one ever wants to leave -- a place where every student and adult who sets foot on our campus feels connected, engaged, inspired, supported, challenged, and happy. With a year under my belt as principal, and trust and relationships built with staff, students, and families, I am confident in our collective ability to move this vision forward in powerful ways.

First and foremost, we are here to educate our young people, ensuring that their Bear River diplomas become passports to incredibly bright futures for which they are immensely prepared. Our state standards emphasize critical thinking, problem-solving, inquiry, collaboration, and communication, which we are working diligently to infuse into all aspects of the Bear River education. We are studying our student achievement data, exploring effective instructional techniques, and gaining the expertise in how to utilize technology to enhance learning. Meanwhile, we are devoted to making sure that EVERY student is connected to our campus in meaningful ways beyond the classroom, which is often achieved through our thriving co-curricular and extra-curricular programs, the arts, clubs, and athletic programs.

There are some very exciting changes and shifts happening at BRHS this year, including new courses, facilities improvements, and several incredible new staff members. **I look forward to introducing all of these new elements to you at Back to School Night on Monday, August 29th.** Of course, you already know that we are implementing our later school start time this year as well -- school will begin at 8:30 each morning. Another exciting, new element is our 1:1 Chromebook initiative; every Bear River student will be issued a Chromebook for use both at home and at school throughout their high school years. Please see the information attached to this letter about the distribution of Chromebooks.

If you know me, you know that I will communicate with you... often and extensively... to the point that you will have no choice but to be completely in the loop on everything going on at Bear River at all times! I believe strongly in the power of working as a team - staff, students, families, and community -- which makes us so much more powerful, especially when we are united around the same goal: ensuring that our students receive a challenging, inspiring, first-rate education and thrive as human beings.

Of course, my door (and heart and mind) are open to you and your family at all times. This year is going to be exceptional, thanks to your dedication to Bear River. Thank you for all of your support and please do feel free to reach out to me at any time. I cannot wait for the 2016-2017 adventure to begin! Let's do this, Bruins!

Truly,

Amy L. Besler
Principal, Bear River High School
Email: abesler@njuhsd.com

*Don't forget to "like" us on Facebook, "follow" us on Instagram,
and check out our BRHS website!*

MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THESE UPCOMING EVENTS!

Student schedules available (on eSchools Home Access)	Friday, August 12	
Senior Information Night	Monday, August 15	6 - 7 PM
Freshmen/New Students Orientation	Tuesday, August 16	6 - 7 PM
First Day of School	Wed., August 17	Min. Day
Jungle Dance (for all students)	Friday, August 19	7:30 - 10:30 PM
Athlete Committed Code Night	Tuesday, August 23	6 - 7 PM
Picture Day	Friday, August 26	
Back To School Night	Monday, August 29	6 - 8:30 PM

**SCHOOL STARTS ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 17th AT 8:30 A.M.
PLEASE NOTE: THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL WILL BE A MINIMUM DAY.
STUDENTS WILL BE RELEASED AT 12:50 P.M.**

STUDENT SCHEDULES

Students can view their schedules online on eSchools Home Access starting on Friday, August 12. The Home Access link is a button on the main page of our website. Freshmen will receive their schedules at orientation on Tuesday, the 16th.

If there is a problem with your student's schedule, "fixes" will be made within the first three days of school. Students can submit the Schedule Fix Request Form in the Counseling Department and counselors will respond to them accordingly. Keep in mind, schedules will only be "fixed" based on an error, not based on a student having changed his or her mind about taking a class. Months of effort have gone into designing the master schedule based on student requests in addition to balancing class sizes and student schedules.

Schedules will only be "fixed" based on:

- Missing a course(s) required for graduation (particularly for seniors)
- Blank/missing a class period (does not include "Early/Late" arrival for seniors)
- Student has not met a prerequisite for a course - Example: A student registered for a course, but did not meet requirements needed to take that course (i.e. registered for Spanish 2 but did not pass Spanish 1).
- Student has duplicate courses

TO RECEIVE A SCHEDULE:

ALL RETURNING STUDENTS MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING TURNED IN:

Emergency Card & Mandatory Parent/Guardian Signature Form

*Most returning students turned in the required forms in the spring

ALL NEW STUDENTS MUST HAVE THE FOLLOWING TURNED IN:

Registration Form, Emergency Card, & Mandatory Parent/Guardian Signature Form

Book fines need to be cleared. (Students owing money for lost books/fines have received a letter during the summer.) Books returned and fines paid help defray budget constraints.

FRESHMEN/NEW STUDENTS ORIENTATION

Welcome to the Bruin family, Class of 2020 and all new members of the Bruin family! We are looking forward to seeing all of our 9th graders and new students at Freshmen/New Students Orientation, which will be held in the quad from 6 PM – 7 PM on Tuesday, August 16, 2016. This event is strictly for students; parents, please plan to drop off and pick up! See you then!

SENIOR INFORMATION NIGHT

We encourage ALL seniors AND their parents to join us in the theatre on Monday, August 15th from 6-7 PM to learn about everything you'll need to know about the senior year, including Senior Project, college readiness and application information, scholarships, the ordering of graduation items, yearbooks, athletics, Grad Night and more! It will be an information-packed hour you won't want to miss.

CHROMEBOOK DISTRIBUTION

In order for each student to be issued a Chromebook (for use at school and at home throughout high school), a parent needs to read/view pertinent information about the process, expectations, and other topics. This information will be emailed to families through School Messenger soon and will be available on our website. Once you have read, viewed, and discussed the information, you will sign a form acknowledging that you have received the information and the student will return this form to school. The Chromebooks will then be distributed to students through our library check-out process during the school day, much like textbooks are checked out. All of this is slated to happen within the first few days of school. The district's Technology Department will also host an evening informational session at Bear River shortly thereafter (specific date to follow) so that you can ask questions and receive more information.

ATHLETES COMMITTED CODE NIGHT

We are excited to continue with the alignment of *Athlete Committed* with our athletic programs at BRHS, with its research-based approach to student athlete health and well-being. All athletes, along with their parent/guardian, are required to attend the mandatory Code Night presentation, ensuring that all involved are well-informed of the Code of Conduct and are educated on critical areas such as chemical health (substance use), bullying/harassment, nutrition, sleep and training/recovery.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

Let's make this the most well-attended Back-to-School Night in BRHS history! We want to see all parents on Monday, August 29th from 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM (beginning in the theatre). Principal Besler will set the stage for the school year, update you on all the new developments, and introduce new staff members, and then you will have the opportunity to get to know your students' teachers.

ALL-ACCESS PASS

The All-Access Pass is now available in the Student Store for only \$65. For this amazing price, the student will receive:

- This year's theme t-shirt: "Bruins United"
- Free entry into Fall Homecoming Dance, Winter Homecoming Dance, and Last Chance Dance
- Free entry into ALL home sporting events (with the exception of playoff games)

This is an unbelievable deal that pays for itself several times over! See Adina in the Student Store or send your Bruin to school with \$65 (cash or check) to purchase.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAM

Our district is committed to continuing to provide high-quality, nutritious breakfasts and lunches for our students, prepared from scratch in our kitchens -- this level of quality in school meals is certainly rare. We spend quite a bit more than we earn when it comes to providing these meals for our students, but see the value of maintaining this excellent level of quality. However, our prices will need to increase a bit this year, to help alleviate some of the deficit spending and allow us to continue our outstanding food service. The new prices are more comparable to what other districts are already charging. Breakfasts will increase from \$1.75 to \$2.00 and lunches will increase from \$3.50 to \$4.00.

We encourage all families to check out the School Lunch Program information on our district website: (www.njuhsdfood.com) to see if your family qualifies for free or reduced meal prices. The application is simple and can be completed online or on paper. In addition to the meal programs, you also qualify for: waiver of college application fees; free AP testing; free SAT and ACT testing; eligibility for certain scholarships; Comcast internet service (at the reduced cost of \$9.95/month). Our district benefits from students participating in this program, as it allows us to receive additional funding to support student programs for every student enrolled in the program. It's a win-win!

BRUIN TIME & TEACHER COLLABORATION

Our primary focus is on learning for all of our students, and our work is centered on the four crucial questions that drive the work of a professional learning community:

- *What do we want students to learn?*
- *How will we know when each student has learned it?*
- *How will we respond when a student experiences difficulty in learning?*
- *What will we do to enrich the learning for those students who have achieved mastery of the learning?*

A core principle of our professional learning community is that, as educators, we must work together to achieve our collective purpose of learning for all. As a means of facilitating the collaborative process, we adopted a schedule that allows time for our teachers, staff, and administrators to work together to address our goals for improved student learning. This schedule has allowed for teachers to meet regularly for scheduled collaboration within and across departments. In addition, we are continuing to modify our policies and procedures with regard to Bruin Time to provide structured study hall, remediation and enrichment opportunities for our students.

Please remember that all freshmen and sophomores are scheduled for Bruin Time.

Juniors and seniors are scheduled into Bruin Time/Remediation if they have a D or an F in a class. Junior and senior students may also request to be placed in Bruin Time if they so desire. If a junior or senior student is not scheduled into Bruin Time, he/she may leave campus. We will provide study hall opportunities for those juniors and seniors who remain on campus for extracurricular activities or who must wait for the bus. Please remember that Bruin Time minutes count as instructional minutes for all students who are scheduled into Bruin Time. Please, if your student is enrolled in Bruin Time, it is imperative he/she attends.

Bruin Time will be held at the end of the school day Monday through Thursday, and the early release for collaboration days will be on Fridays when scheduled. A calendar of the early release days will be posted on our website. **Please note that the Bruin Time/early release schedule will not begin until Tuesday, September 6th. The first day of school is a minimum day, and we will then follow a traditional 6 period day with release at 3:24 p.m. through Friday, Sept. 2nd.**

BRHS WEBSITE

We ask you to visit our website at <http://bearriver.njuhsd.com/> (Click on Information, then Policies, where you will find our Annual Parent Notification materials. Our site contains all the required annual notifications related to pertinent board policies and education codes, as well as optional information regarding programs like Indian Education, pesticide notification, the release of student directory information, and sex education. I Please log on to <http://njuhsdfood.com/> for information regarding our Food Services programs, as well as the online method of adding money to your student's account.

Also, please check our website for the 2016-2017 bus schedule. The bus schedule can be located under "Transportation" which is located under the "Information" tab.

TEACHING STUDENTS MUTUAL RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER

The hazing, harassment, sexual harassment or inappropriate treatment of any student will not be tolerated. We continue to work with all students to treat each other and all people with mutual respect and consideration. As an educational community we want to work with students and parents to address this problem.

CLEAN CAMPUS

Our campus is a showpiece of this community and a source of pride. We continue to emphasize to students and visitors the importance of keeping our campus clean, as it is a reflection of our values, community, and Bruin pride.

DRESS CODE

The NJUHSD Board of Trustees approved dress code will be enforced. Specific details of the Dress Code can be found on the Bear River High School's website.

ATTENDANCE (Administrative Regulation 5113)

A student who is absent from class three or more days, has excessive tardiness or has three incidents of truancy, receives a First Notification of Truancy or Excessive Absences letter, which we hope will encourage your student to attend on a more regular basis.

TRUANCY/TARDIES

A board policy was established regarding truancy. The purpose of this policy is to provide for mandatory, effective and uniform truancy enforcement. Consequences for continued truancy can include court appearances (SAM) and the loss of a student's driver's license. Time lost due to truanies or excessive absences must be made up.

PARENT ACCESS TO GRADES AND OTHER STUDENT INFORMATION

The "Home Access" link (a button on the main page of our website) allows parents to check students' grades and attendance on an on-going basis throughout the school year. Parents and students who do not currently have accounts for Home Access will receive this information in early fall. Stay tuned for information from teachers about www.schoology.com, which provides more in-depth information about a particular class (like a website for that course).

We can't wait to see you all soon! Go, Bruins!