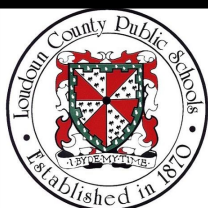




Blue Ridge Middle School Annual Report 2020 – 2021



Blue Ridge's Mission



Blue Ridge Middle School is committed to academic excellence for all students in order to encourage them to be successful, responsible, and productive citizens. We recognize the importance of providing a climate where students' academic, social and emotional needs are met. We are dedicated to providing a climate of high expectations and caring human relationships.

Blue Ridge Middle School is a School to Watch

Blue Ridge Middle School stands firmly behind the values espoused in its mission statement. Students at Blue Ridge Middle School are valued members of our school community. You can truly see our mission statement in practice if you walk the halls of our middle school.

Teachers work diligently to promote student achievement. They develop dynamic, engaging lessons during their CLT meetings and create common assessments to gauge student learning. Our staff embraces PBL opportunities to link content to our community and world. Our English staff believes strongly in student agency. Students are given choices in their writing then students work through a student-led writer's conference with their teacher. Visit a science classroom to see students stretching their critical thinking skills in an inquiry-based science lab. These are just two of the many examples of our mission statement at work.

Teachers, administrators, and all staff members value the importance of relationship building for the middle level learner. From the Name Game to our unique Club Schedule to our PBIS activities, our staff and students all thrive on the meaningful and successful relationships we have developed.

This is why Blue Ridge Middle School was re-designated during the 2019-2020 school year by the *Schools to Watch* organization as a high-performing middle school. With a concerted effort to meet the unique developmental needs of the middle level learner, Blue Ridge Middle School promotes academic excellence, social equity and ensures that our organizational structure and instruction are developmentally responsive to the needs of our students. These categories are the core criteria used to earn a school this designation.



In our Annual Report, we will highlight the various ways Blue Ridge Middle School excels in the aforementioned categories. Selected Schools to Watch criteria can be found throughout this document.

Blue Ridge: Past and Present—Culture of Excellence

Blue Ridge Middle School opened on former farm land on the south side of Purcellville in 1971. This new middle school, serving grades six through eight, was the feeder school to Loudoun Valley High School. As the end of the 20th century saw an increase in the need for more classrooms in Western Loudoun, several expansions and a major renovation in 2005 aligned the architectural design with the new middle schools being built in other areas of Loudoun County. Blue Ridge currently has a student population of 950 students.

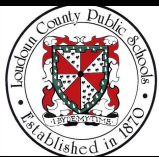


Virginia Naturally School

Blue Ridge Middle School continues to be a Virginia Naturally School. The 2020-2021 school year represented our 14th consecutive designation. The goal of the school program is to recognize efforts undertaken by Virginia schools to increase environmental awareness and stewardship of its students.

Foothills to the future...

Blue Ridge Middle School
Loudoun County Public Schools
551 East A Street
Purcellville, VA 20132
<https://www.lcps.org/brms>



Blue Ridge Middle School: Selected Schools to Watch

- All students meet high academic standards.
- Curriculum, instruction, assessment, and appropriate academic interventions are aligned with high standards.
- The curriculum emphasizes deep understanding of important concepts and the development of essential skills.
- Instructional strategies include a variety of challenging and engaging activities that are clearly related to the grade-level standards, concepts, and skills being taught.
- Teachers use a variety of methods to assess and monitor the progress of student learning.
- The faculty and master schedules provide students time to meet rigorous academic standards.
- Teachers know what each student has learned and still needs to learn.
- The adults in the school are provided time and frequent opportunities to enhance student achievement by working with colleagues to deepen their knowledge and to improve their standards-based practice.

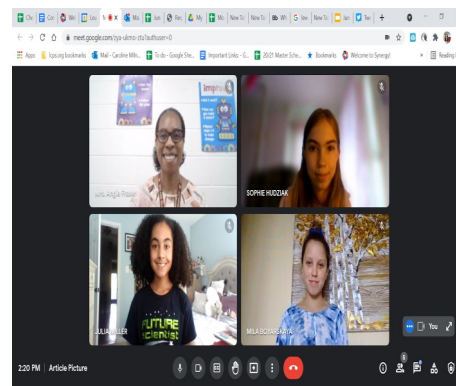
Academic Growth and Excellence

The 2020-2021 school year presented many challenges to the traditional school format. Through this however, BRMS teachers worked diligently to learn new methods of presenting curriculum that was engaging, meaningful, and exciting to students in all three grades. Using Project Based Learning, our teachers were able to provide experiences that were not only rigorous, but also provided our students with real world challenges that required creative and higher levels of thinking to solve problems that are faced on an everyday basis, inside and outside of the school setting. Students were challenged through, and successful in, academic competitions such as the Scholastic Achievement and Writing Awards, The Conrad Challenge (coding), Battle of the Books, the Nature Journal Contest, the Continental Math League, as well as many other school based classroom projects. BRMS students, distance learners and in-person learners, were provided with an after the school day opportunity to dissect frogs with the science faculty as well as participated in various co-curricular activities such as the Solo Musical Festival. In all, more than 90 Blue Ridge Middle School students received recognition for their outstanding performance in the classroom, in the community, or in other forms of scholastic competition.



Harlie Reich (6th)– Roger Tory Peterson Young Naturalist Nature Journal

In addition to the outstanding students of BRMS, we are proud of how our teachers approached the challenges of learning and developing professional practices during the 2020-2021 school year. The science faculty dedicated time outside of their work hours to engage and enrich students, and BRMS teachers received notoriety across the country for their contributions to curriculum and instruction. Ms. Patti Benalayay (Social Sciences) was selected to serve on the Teacher Advisory Council at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, PA. Ms. Angela Fraser (Coding) had three students; Julia Miller, Sophie Hudziak, and Liudmila Boyarskaya, join together to compete in the Conrad Challenge educational experience that is a student-driven, project based approach that requires students to apply science and technology to solve problems with a global impact. Ms. Fraser also had BRMS students working collaboratively with another middle school and Dr. Patrick White from Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, to participate in the Johnson Space Center's Office of STEM Engagement NASA App Development Challenge. Through this challenge, students used teamwork, collaboration, and programming to create an app to assist NASA with future space missions.



Top: Ms. Angela Fraser, Sophie Hudziak
Bottom: Julia Miller, Mila Boyarskaya

In all, BRMS maintained a high quality, rigorous, yet engaging academic learning experience for students in all grade levels during perhaps the most challenging two years the education profession has ever known. Our students, faculty, and community came together as one Bulldog Family to unite and overcome the challenge, because, "What You Do Matters!"



Recognizing and Promoting Excellence

- **Continental Math League winners:** BRMS students participated in the CML which is a competition where students showcase their problem solving capabilities with students from all across the United States. Our 6th Grade achievers were: Noelle Cates (1st Place) with Waylee Hyett, Hunter Myers, Hailey Dunkerly, Elizabeth Heinle, and Diya Nawaz receiving recognition. 7th Grade included: Jolyon White (1st Place) with Saisanketha Bharatula, Gavin Kearney, Caleb Nicholson, Abigail Winn, and Amelia Haws providing outstanding performances. And our 8th Grade honorees: Max Riley (1st Place) with Myleen Hyett, Ted Lantow, Kayla Dunkerly, and Ryan Mock all showcasing their achievements.
- **BRMS spelling bee winners:** 8th Grader Meredith Kula was the BRMS Champion with Norah McCormick (7th Grade) finishing as First Runner-Up and Kylie Luke (7th Grade) being the Second Runner-Up.
- **Malone Foundation Award:** Ben Demase, Izabella Hortega, Max Riley, and Keller Roberts
- **Debbie Mueller Award:** Montana Cochran
- **Bulldog Award:** Kayla Dunkerly and Julian Israel
- **Academies of Loudoun Attendees:** Bristol Hetherington, Isabelle Hinkle, Daniel Leskiv, Hayden Patel, Luke Rohrbach, Maya Weir, Rebecca Alvarez, Kate Caling, John Hasle, Ted Lantow, Mircea Nemes, and Max Riley
- **Solo Music Festival Awards:** Superior Rating– Ben Demase, John Hall, Maggie Tirona, Saisandhura Bharatula, Caleb Nicholson, Sarah Ney, Madison Racino, Maddie Babb, Frances King, Sophie Schober, Sydney Bergman, Amelia Haws, Isabelle Hinkle, Kate Caling, and Mayleen Hyett. Excellent Rating– Kearney Cunningham and Bryna Sheehan.



Meredith Kula– Spelling Bee Champion



Montana Cochran– Mueller Award

Cornerstone Awards

Blue Ridge Middle School is committed to recognizing student achievement and effort through our Cornerstone Awards program. Each quarter, grade level teams selected one male and one female student from his or her team to be recognized during the Cornerstone ceremony. Students were awarded a Cornerstone pin, BRMS bumper sticker, and a BRMS bulldog pennant. The Cornerstone categories include: citizenship, effort, scholarship, leadership, as well as academic achievement in math, reading, and writing.

Character Counts!

At Blue Ridge Middle School, we recognize and promote good character through our Character Counts program. This is a national program that highlights six key pillars of character: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, caring, fairness, and citizenship. When students display any of these traits, staff members nominate them to receive a Character Counts award. Students who receive this award enjoy a celebration with their family members and earn a Character Counts bracelet. Nominees are recognized quarterly and their actions are read aloud for all to hear. It is wonderful to see all the proud parents and positive impact these students have on our school.



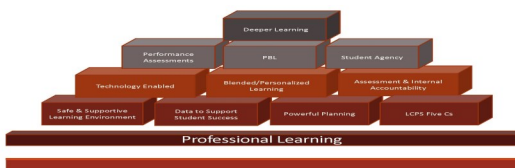
Department Awards

Continuing rich academic traditions at Blue Ridge, staff members recognized 2020-2021 8th grade department winners in ten categories. These categories included: math, science, social science, English, word languages and cultures, physical education, fine arts, technology education, family and consumer science, and spectrum. These students represent an elite group of our most dedicated learners at Blue Ridge Middle School. Students were honored by having their names engraved on a plaque that will be displayed in the halls of BRMS.



Distance Learning to Hybrid In-Person

During the Pandemic of Spring and Fall of 2020, BRMS teachers and students expanded their learning and embraced the new world of distance and synchronous learning. BRMS successfully created an internet café learning experience for students that were experiencing difficulties with internet service. Through this, our teachers provided in-depth learning and exciting opportunities and our students excelled during this challenging time. In March of 2021, Blue Ridge Middle facilitated the return to in-person learning when close to half of our student population chose to participate in the Hybrid In-Person learning environment. Teachers, students, and their families were excited to be re-united and together as a Bulldog family once again!



The 600 Club

At Blue Ridge, we encourage students to reach their potential and excel in a rigorous curriculum. Our students consistently show high levels of mastery on SOL exams. To recognize this academic achievement, we created a wall of fame for our 600 Club students. Blue Ridge Middle School students are a part of the 600 Club. Keep up the great work!

Writing Awards

Scholastic Writing Awards National/Regional Winners

- Benjamn Demase, Short Story, Gold Key
- Maggie Alicea, Poetry, Silver Key
- Chance Harcrow, Short Story, Silver Key
- Evelyn McCann, Flash Fiction, Silver Key
- Simon Teague, Humor, Silver Key
- Jessica Woerner, Flash Silver Key
- Honorable Mention– Spencer Dyson, Kyle Galletta, Ava Olechna, and Maxwell Riley



Mr. Kursman and Ben Demase, Gold Key Winner

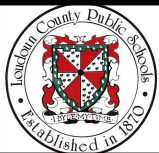
Battle of the Books

Congratulations to the Blue Ridge Middle School Battle of the Books team. This year, team members, Clarin Gaucher, Derek Peters, Eleanor Waldschuetz, Katharine Hannah, Jessica Woerner, and Izzy Eden competed against, and won over, three other Loudoun County middle schools! The team members proved their dedication as they worked through three difficult challenges to come out victorious.



BRMS Battle of the Books Team 2020-2021

Social Equity at BRMS



Selected Schools to Watch Criteria: Social Equity

- Teachers continually adapt curriculum, instruction, assessment, and scheduling to meet their students' diverse and changing needs.
- Students have ongoing opportunities to learn about and appreciate their own and others' cultures.
- The school community knows every student well.
- The faculty welcomes and encourages the active participation of all its families and makes sure that all its families are an integral part of the school.
- The school's reward system is designed to value diversity, civility, service, and democratic citizenship.
- Staff members understand and support the family backgrounds and values of its students.

Bulldogs Give Back!!

During the pandemic of 2020-2021, the BRMS SCA was unable to hold its traditional food drive that shows how our students and families care for others. However, even with restrictions in place, BRMS students gathered over 300 pounds of food that was donated to Tree of Life!



PAWSitivity



The Unified Mental Health Team continued to provide a variety of services and resources to students and families throughout distance learning. Weekly social-emotional lessons were developed and sent out to all students and parents in the form of PAWSitivity lessons. A variety of topics relevant to success during distance learning were covered, including time management, how to establish a routine, the importance of spending time with family, and a review of Sources of Strength.

Celebrating All Bulldogs

Under the leadership of Dr. Eric Williams, Loudoun County Public Schools has solidified its ongoing commitment to an inclusive, safe, caring, and challenging learning environment. LCPS actively denounces hateful language and actions based on race, religion, country of origin, gender identity, sexual orientation, and/or ability because such language and action encourage discrimination, hatred, oppression, and violence.

Every individual is valued in Loudoun County Public Schools and LCPS encourages us to celebrate the diversity that helps define us as a school division. One way Blue Ridge celebrates diversity is by our annual recognition of the National Black History Month. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History (ASALH) was founded in 1915 by Dr. Carter G. Woodson. Its mission is to promote, research, preserve, interpret, and disseminate information about Black life, history and culture to the global community. Each year, a theme is provided to focus the public's attention.

Students at Blue Ridge Middle School honored this year's Black History Month theme, "*The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity*," during the month of February through their Social Science classes. Students highlighted defining events, such as the American Revolution and the Man on the Moon, while honoring African American representation. The culminating activity saw the students creating a U.S. Commemorative Stamp which was shared among the grade levels.

Achieving Beyond the Classroom

- Blue Ridge students Izabella Hortega (8th), Maya Weir (8th), and Delaney Weir (6th) were all honored recipients of the Northrup Grumman Space Academy full tuition scholarships to attend their 6 day Space Academy at the U.S. Space & Rocket Center in Huntsville, Alabama.
- Aarya Arun (6th) secured the Gold Medal in 2021 in the 2021 USA Archery JOAD Indoor Nationals as well as the Silver Medal in the USA Archery Indoor Nationals. He was also 1st place in both competitions in Virginia.



Aarya Arun - National Champion

Safe School Ambassadors and Peer Helpers

The school counselors continued our Safe School Ambassador and Peer Helper programs. These programs support our school's positive climate. Students learn how to intercede in challenging situations, and they model appropriate interactions. Students also learn strategies to encourage positive behavior and kindness.

OTTW/PBL

BLUE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL PBL 2019-2020

MATH 8

Balance a budget, plan a healthy meal that can be purchased on a field trip then share ideas with parents and classmates

ALGEBRA

Connect Algebraic equations with real-world application through communication with business partnerships

GEOMETRY

Write a company of an ad of their choice and give them suggestions on how to make the ad logically sound or make a specific compliment

GERMAN

Students will select clothing to donate to a local charity and explain the donation in German

SPANISH

Use Spanish to communicate a donation of clothing to various community outreach programs

BLUE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL PBL 2019-2020

ENGLISH 6

Use visual deconstruction to purposefully retain text to demonstrate that words can inspire visual imagery

ENGLISH 7

Create a personal poem that invokes emotion and present it at a public poetry reading

ENGLISH 8

Create and prepare a writing sample for a Scholastic Writing Competition using the requirements for publication and directions on how to take it public

MATH 6/7

Students will calculate recipes and prepare soup jars to donate to the Tree of Life

MATH 7

Students will research Global Warming and choose a call to action that can be implemented in support of Earth Day

BLUE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL PBL 2019-2020

Project Based Learning

2019-2020 SEMESTER 1

CREATED BY BLUE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL STAFF AND STUDENTS



551 E A ST, PURCELLVILLE, VA 20132
540-751-2520

HISTORY 6

Explore local historical sites and discuss the importance of historical preservation

HISTORY 7

Create a possible solution to a problem that is facing our nation today

CIVICS

Create a campaign advertisement that addresses a political issue that both student and candidate care about

TECH ED 7

Create, build and share a problem-solving activity using wood and marbles

FRENCH 1&2

Establish a pen pal relationship to students in France who are learning English

ART 6

Illustrate and share a cohesive visual image that demonstrates the interpretation of created poem

ART 7&8

Promote social issues that are important to them through visual propaganda.

CTE

Students from various departments will work together to advertise, make and sell S'mores to raise money to donate to local Veterans

MUSIC

Prepare for a public musical performance by working together as a team to practice, listen and synchronize to create a more polished product

SPECTRUM

Create and share a way that our generation make a positive impact on the health of our global environment

COMPUTER APPLICATION

Create and share an animated short story about the relevance of computer science

SCIENCE 6

Create and share a detailed profile of an object that can be found in outer space

LIFE SCIENCE 7

Create and share an explanation of how the traits of the student have been passed down from previous generations

PHYSICAL SCIENCE 8

Create and share a safety profile of chemicals that are regularly in the lives of our community members

HEALTH AND PE

Design and demonstrate a physical fitness workout that is relevant and interesting to peers